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# Rational Lovers.

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THE

Rational Lovers.



A N O V E L.

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THE  
RATIONAL LOVERS:

OR, THE  
HISTORY  
OF  
Sir Charles Leufum,  
AND  
Mrs. Frances Fermor.

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IN TWO VOLUMES.

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V O L. II.

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L O N D O N:

Printed for FRANCIS NOBLE, at his Circulating Library, Middle-Row, Holborn;

AND

JOHN NOBLE, at his Circulating Library,  
St. Martin's-Court, Leicester-Square.

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MDCCLXIX.

RATIONAL ROVERS:

OR THE

HISTORY

Sir Charles Lemon,

AND

Mrs. Frances Lemon.



IN TWO VOLUMES

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LONDON

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## RATIONAL LOVERS.

### BOOK IV.

**W**HEN Mrs. Fermor had closed her narrative, Sir Charles thanked her for the confidence she had reposed in him, and, in the highest terms, expressed his entire approbation of her conduct: it had, indeed, appeared so extraordinary and so laudable, considering her youth, inexperience, and dangerous situation, that his affection and

VOL. II. B esteem



esteem for her were considerably increased. "But, surely, Mrs. Fermor," said he "there is nothing in what you have related that can, in the least, deter you from marrying again.—There are not, I hope, many husbands like the very undeserving one who fell to your share.—Have you, after all," continued he, "so very indifferent an opinion of me, as really to believe that I shall, in any shape, resemble him?"

"No," replied she; "but if I am happier as I am, you will, doubtless, if you actually esteem me as much as you pretend to do, cease to persuade me to change my condition."

"I would not, for the world, my dear Mrs. Fermor," said he, "persuade you to any thing which would not, in my opinion, certainly increase your felicity. You just now declared, that  
"you

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“ you have ever been an admirer of a  
“ country life: if that life is still your  
“ taste, I will chearfully quit London  
“ entirely: every place in which you  
“ reside must be the only desirable place  
“ for me.—You shall reign sole mistress  
“ of me and mine: you shall be the un-  
“ controuled disposer of your company  
“ and your time: a large sum shall be  
“ immediately settled on you, by which  
“ you will be rendered perfectly inde-  
“ pendent; by which you will be enabled  
“ to please yourself in every respect, and  
“ to assist those whom you think deserv-  
“ ing of your bounty—To relieve worthy  
“ objects in distress will, I am assured,  
“ from the proofs I have already seen of  
“ the benevolence of your disposition,  
“ always afford you an heart-felt satis-  
“ faction: and the more objects you are  
“ empowered to relieve, the more of  
“ that satisfaction will, I trust, be felt by

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“you.—Consider, a moment, my dear  
“Mrs. Fermor, before you doom me to  
“despair, whether the tenderest love,  
“and the sincerest esteem, together with  
“the most assiduous, unwearied attention  
“on to please, cannot make you endure,  
“at least, a man whom time may, possibly,  
“render less disagreeable to you  
“than he is at present.”

His emotions were so violent while he spoke the last words, that they were uttered with broken accents, and a faltering voice—He was even obliged to turn away his face, and take out his handkerchief to wipe away a tear which stole down his cheek.

Mrs. Fermor saw, in his expressive silence, the anguish of his soul: she saw it, and was touched: but she was touched with pity, not with love.

After a moment's pause, during which she gave him a little time to recover himself,

self, she good-naturedly held out her  
 hand to him, and, with a smile which al-  
 most made him amends for her refusal,  
 said, "Come, Sir Charles, do not let us  
 "be too serious; you, already, know  
 "my sentiments upon this subject: I can-  
 "not, believe me, alter them: but to con-  
 "vince you that you are not so disagreea-  
 "ble to me as you imagine yourself to  
 "be, let me divert you, by the descripti-  
 "on of my interview with Maynard;  
 "and you, in return shall tell me what  
 "threw you into such a fuss about  
 "him."

Sir Charles, still more than ever charm-  
 ed with her amiable behaviour to him,  
 though more than ever hopeless of suc-  
 ceeding with her, fetched a deep sigh,  
 and, by a respectful waving of his head,  
 shewed that he was ready to attend to  
 her; but when she had related Maynard's  
 deportment he glowed with indignation:



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“ Insolent rascal,” cried he, “ how  
“ dared he to behave in so brutal a  
“ manner to you ? But I will make him  
“ repent of his audacity.”

“ Nay now, Sir Charles,” replied  
she, after a moment’s consideration,  
“ you will, I am certain, allow that you  
“ are too warm.”

“ Not in your cause, madam. He shall  
“ not, however, hold the lease of his  
“ ground, if you prohibit all other re-  
“ venge.”

“ Revenge,” answered she, is so  
“ mean, so despicable a passion, and we  
“ commonly appear so very contempt-  
“ ible by giving way to it, that the inju-  
“ ry levelled against our adversary most  
“ frequently recoils upon ourselves.—

“ No, Sir Charles, if I have any influence  
“ over you, assure me solemnly, (and  
“ resolve, before-hand, most religiously  
“ to abide by your promise,) that you  
“ will

"will not, in any way, take the least notice of him. A total neglect, believe me, mortifies people of his stamp more than any thing you can say to them."

"You are, I fancy, right, madam: nay I am certain that you are so, in every thing you do or say: right upon every subject but that in which my peace is concerned—But do not," added he, seeing her grow serious, "do not look angrily at me—Why am I to blame, because every word which issues from your charming lips heightens my passion for you?—Pity me at least, if you cannot love me."

Mrs. Fermor, who began to think the conversation might be carried too far; who could no longer question the sincerity of her young lover's professions, as his every look, his every motion was as eloquent as, if not more than, his tongue,

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and

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and who, though, she did not love him, esteemed him enough not to be pleased at his uneasiness, replied, "Come, Sir Charles, you have not heard my harpsichord a great while, and I am just now in a mighty musical humour: I will play a lesson to you, and it shall be a chearful one, that I may send you home in good spirits."

She, accordingly, sat down, and rattled away some of the most lively airs she could think of; and then, with a bewitching smile, cried, "Well, Sir, how do you find yourself now?"

"Always enchanted with Mrs. Fermor's good humour," said he, "and with her obliging endeavours to chear an heart entirely in her power."

"Well then," replied she, "as it grows late I will wish you a good night."

As Sir Charles always understood the meaning of those words, he left her immediately;

mediately; mortified, cruelly, at not having been able to prevail on her to be his wife, but pleased to find that Maynard was thoroughly routed, whom he longed to correct for his impudence, but her absolute commands against any correction kept his ardor within proper bounds: when he reflected coolly upon the just and sensible reasons which she urged to dissuade him from revenge, and, on the mildness of her behaviour to him, he became more and more enamoured with her.—Her determined refusal, indeed, occasioned many heart-breaking sighs, but he could not help being glad that he had again ventured to talk so freely to her upon the subject which engrossed his thoughts.—“She knows that  
 “I love her,” said he; “she knows that  
 “I must always love her: time and  
 “perseverance may, perhaps, be yet  
 “my friends.”



With those flattering hopes he repeated his visits, and redoubled his attentions to amuse and entertain her. He was naturally extremely amiable, and his endeavours to please did not render him less so.—Compassion, also, on her side, as she could not avoid seeing he was hurt by her indifference, strongly urged her to lessen the appearance of it; and by so doing she enlarged her powers of pleasing to a degree far exceeding his warmest expectations. She grew absolutely irresistible.

Sir Charles was young; and, neither from constitution nor principle, a platonist: but the mention of his passion was so strictly forbidden, that the temptations to talk about it became every hour stronger; and under such a prohibition he actually suffered more than can well be imagined.—Not that he would have made the slightest deviation from respect in his

his carriage to Mrs. Fermor, which was equal to his love, if she had consented to the completion of his happiness: but he wished to be received on the footing of a lover, as he might, in that character, have been decently admitted to a thousand innocent liberties which would have given some ease to his anguished mind: as he was circumstanced, he was obliged, however acute his disquietudes were, to conceal them; and, by concealing them, they became almost distracting.

While he was in this uneligible situation, Mr. Brudenel returning from his excursion, called again on him.

Sir Charles, glad to pour out his sorrows into the bosom of his friend, spoke of Mrs. Fermor in such ecstatic terms of admiration, and lamented his inability to please her in such pathetic language, that Brudenel, who had not the highest opinion of the sex, was ready

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to let him down for a whining puppy, though he refrained from telling him so, as he well knew that Sir Charles would have resented such a familiar style of speaking.—He inveighed, however, with much asperity of language, against dangles after petticoats; said that he knew the sex thoroughly. “The only way to gain them,” continued he, “is to become as indifferent as themselves; they will, then, be ready enough to hang about any man’s neck who does not care a straw for them.”

“It is your ignorance of the disposition of this amiable woman,” replied Sir Charles, “that makes you talk so—*She* has never been in love; *she* is a stranger to the pains, as well as the transports of *that* passion.—Would to Heaven, that I could make her sensible of the *latter*!”

“Never

"Never been in love?" said Brudenel—"Why, faith, Letsum your's is a  
"pretty extraordinary widow."

"I can ill bear such jesting," said Sir Charles, in a tone which discovered his displeasure—"whoever speaks fligh-  
"tly about a woman so every way  
"exemplary as Mrs. Fermor is, will  
"certainly repent of his licentiousness of  
"speech, whenever it comes to my  
"knowledge."

"Humph;—But come, Sir Charles,"  
said Brudenel, endeavouring to stifle a  
smile, "as you seem to be rather in a  
"deplorable situation, I have thought  
"of two remedies which may, possibly,  
"be of service to you: I hope you will  
"allow, that, if you cannot conquer the  
"widow, the next best thing will be to  
"conquer yourself.—Leave her and go  
"to town for a week or two—Now,  
"perhaps, she may only pretend indif-  
ference,



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“ference, in order to make you more  
“sharp set; if so, your absence will do  
“the business to a hair.”

“Oh! no,” replied Sir Charles; “she  
“is not that sort of woman: she is quite  
“sincere; no deceit can lurk in such a  
“bosom.”

“No, to be sure,” cried Brudenel—  
“but the devil take me if I ever met  
“with a single creature among the sex  
“who was not brimful of hypocrisy.  
“You do not know them, Charles; you  
“do not know them, I tell you: they are  
“all deceitful, from head to foot.”

“If you say any more against her,”  
replied Sir Charles gravely, “I shall  
“run mad, and turn you out at the door  
“—I know women, as well as you do,  
“Mr. Brudenel, but *you* do *not* know  
“Mrs. Fermor, or you would not throw  
“out so many vile hints injurious to her  
“character; against which, by all that’s  
“sacred,

“ sacred, I swear I will hear no more  
“ aspersions.”

The fierce tone with which Sir Charles uttered his last reply, and the formality of his *Mister*, convinced Brudenel that he was really growing choleric; and, as he had that kind of regard for him which men of pleasure generally feel for each other; in other words, as he liked his company, and did not care to lose his acquaintance, he determined to lower his key a little—“ You will not listen to  
“ me,” said he; “ I was going to tell  
“ you that I have met with women who  
“ really have not known whether they  
“ loved a man or not, yet have found  
“ themselves touched to the quick when  
“ afraid of losing him.—Be persuaded  
“ that I actually wish you happy with  
“ the widow: I can have no interest in  
“ wishing otherwise: but do go to town  
“ with me; and, if you chance to meet  
“ with

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“with a girl who can, though for a moment, make you forget this Mrs. Fermor, follow her, whether she be fit for a mistress or a wife, merely *pour tuer le tems*; and, when you grow tired of her, come back—possibly, things may have a better appearance by that time.”

Such were the arguments, with many others, which Brudenel made use of, to prevail on Sir Charles to strive against a passion which began, he plainly saw, to gather strength every hour, but could not induce him to go to town that night: he, therefore, determined to remain with him till the next day, as he was resolved to have his company, at all events.

When Sir Charles found he would not leave his house, he ordered a bed to be prepared for him.

As Brudenel was not an early riser, he stepped out in the morning, to bid adieu to Mrs Fermor.—He was not pleased with

with his friend; yet he thought that he might as well go with him at once, to get rid of him, and try what effect the compliance with his advice would have upon the mistress of his heart; secretly resolving not to make a long stay in town, though he did not tell *her* so. He endeavoured to find out whether she was glad or sorry at his proposed departure; but as she, at that instant, felt no particular sensation, no particular expressions escaped her.

After having walked two or three times to her backwards and forwards, to intreat her to send to the Manor for any thing she might want, (a liberty, however, which she never would have taken) and to tell her that he should order his people to send every thing in season to her, he tore himself away—He found Brudenel just risen, at his return, who, hearing



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hearing where he had been, cried, "Come, then, let us set off directly, or you will go back again in a moment."

Sir Charles, though not happy, could not help smiling at the hurry his friend was in to remove him from the Manor.

In their way to London they entered into a very serious conversation relating to Mrs. Fermor, whom Brudenel, acquainted only with the most profligate part of the sex, really imagined to be an artful woman; a woman who had formed a design against Sir Charles's youth and fortune.—He did not venture to tell him so, in these words, but sily drew him into a little detail of her history.

Finding that some of the persons mentioned in it were not entirely strangers to him, he resolved to come at the truth of her story, by some means; and re-  
solved

solved also, not to lose sight of him; if possible, till he was satisfied about its authenticity.

With that view he decoyed him from one place of public diversion to another, to try if continued dissipation would not eradicate his passion.

One night, the first, indeed, on which Ranelagh was opened for that season, while Sir Charles sauntered in the fashionable circle, leaning on Brudenel's shoulder, the latter joined two ladies, one of whom was a striking beauty: but she was not merely handsome; for one of the finest faces in the world was animated by the strongest expression of sensibility.

After the exchange of a few common compliments, they separated—Sir Charles had then an opportunity to ask who that exceeding pretty girl was?

“I cannot very exactly tell you who she is,” replied Brudenel, “but I believe

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“ believe she has met with misfortunes in  
 “ life, which have obliged her to accept  
 “ of terms at which she might proba-  
 “ bly have started, if she had not been  
 “ under the impulse of necessity. She  
 “ has, in short, been seduced by treache-  
 “ ry, according to her own tale: that,  
 “ you know, is the general cant among  
 “ them all—She is, however, I fancy,  
 “ one of the best of the sort.”

“ It is pity,” said Sir Charles, “ that  
 “ so much beauty should want its finish-  
 “ ing charm, modesty.”

“ Nay,” said Brudenel, “ do not abuse  
 “ my little Lucy: she is not deficient in  
 “ delicacy, I assure you—But you think,  
 “ now, I suppose, that no woman can  
 “ come up to your widow—By the way,  
 “ Charles, it is confoundedly strange, in  
 “ my humble opinion, that a widow,  
 “ of all creatures, should be so excessive-  
 “ ly nice.”

“ Why

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"Why so I have thought, more than once," replied Sir Charles, "but trust me, George, such an angelic purity dwells about her that it charms away every licentious idea, and silences the most rebellious passions."

They met Lucy and her companion in the round—The former fixed her fine eyes immediately upon Sir Charles, and, seeing him observe her, threw them hastily down, and blushed.

"Is she not pretty *now*?" said the artful Brudenel.

"Yes," answered the Baronet, "that affected modesty becomes her."

"It is not affected: she is not willingly, I dare believe, the person she appears—But I will shew her to more advantage; let us take our tea with her."

Sir Charles, at first, refused, but was, at length, led, contrary to his inclination,

to



to a seat to which Brudenel had, before, conducted the ladies.

Sir Charles was naturally gallant, and as his friend, having his view, spurred him on, by being more so himself than usual, - he provoked him to endeavour not to be outdone in gallantry.

As Lucy was the prettiest, she was the person whom he addressed, and discovered great satisfaction at the notice which Sir Charles took of her; but a satisfaction attended with the most agreeable confusion imaginable.

Sir Charles, in the course of the evening, chatted a good deal with her, and found her not destitute of understanding.

When it was time to think of going home, Brudenel offered his coach to the ladies, and they accepted of it, with a number of apologies. Sir Charles waited

on Lucy, and, by the management of his friend, was placed next to her.

On their entering London, the coach, driven, through carelessness, against another, was overturned, and Lucy fainted on the bosom of Sir Charles; her fright was not affected: when they took her out she seemed rather dead than alive.

As she had discovered so much terror, Sir Charles put her into a chair and guarded her to her lodgings, while Brudenel disappeared with her companion.

He went in with her to see how she did after her fright, and she thanked him for his care in such terms, accompanied with such looks and sighs, that they could not have failed of making an impression upon an heart disengaged.

When she had somewhat recovered herself, she, with down-cast eyes, and blushes, made a great many apologies for

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for bringing him to such a place, (her apartment, indeed, was a very mean one) but hoped that it would not totally prejudice him against her: adding, that, however faulty she had been, she had also been very unfortunate, and, that she flattered herself she should be entitled to his compassion, at least, when he had heard her sad—sad story.

Sir Charles, who considered so pathetic a preamble only as delivered with a design to draw a little money out of his pocket, took out his purse, and, giving it into her hand, told her that he would not trouble her to relate the history of her affairs, as it was late and as she might want rest after her fright, but that he would come and see her another time.

Lucy, astonished at his immediate generosity, still more so at the expressions which attended it, but in no hurry to take

take advantage of it, caught him by the coat, as he was walking towards the door, and, giving him back his purse, cried, "Oh! Sir, I am not mercenary; your pity, and your esteem, believe me, if I can but render myself deserving of them, will be far more valuable to me than mines of gold.—But do not think me quite unworthy of your notice—Stay—No—I will not ask such a favour—To-morrow it may be more agreeable to you—May I hope that you will condescend to see me to-morrow?"

Sir Charles, surprized at her behaviour and touched with her emotions, forced the purse into her hand, which he pressed, and then, leaving her, returned home with a firm resolution to do something more for her, if, upon hearing her story, he found that she shewed any desire to quit the life which she led.



It cannot be supposed, that, with his youth and constitution, he felt no temptation to take liberties with so beautiful a creature, from whom he had no reason to expect a vigorous resistance. The tender looks, indeed, which she directed to him, and her whole behaviour, evinced a desire to detain him, and to make an impression upon his heart, but there was nothing loose nor wanton in her carriage: she seemed, on the contrary, as fearful of not pleasing, as she was desirous to please.—By that winning carriage she prejudiced him strongly in her favour, and made him, instead of giving way to the passion of the moment, determine to conquer it, at least, till he had made farther discoveries.

He went, next morning, to breakfast with Brudenel, who asked him immediately what he had done with his little girl.

“I do

"I do not know what to make of her," said Sir Charles.

"Make of her!" cried Brudenel—"what have you made nothing of her yet?"

"No—She is an elegant young creature: there is a delicate sensibility in her which is very touching—If I thought it possible for her to be induced to change her way of life, I would most chearfully assist her."

"You are, then, going to turn methodist?" said Brudenel, drily—

"Why so? do I shew the slightest marks of that character, because I cannot see beauty in distress without wishing to relieve it?"

"Your best way of relieving Lucy," said Brudenel, "will be, I fancy, to take her into keeping. The little toad doats on your person, and I am pretty certain, that your attentions about her

"last night were equally seducing. She  
 "is not a common girl, I will assure  
 "you," continued he, seeing Sir Charles  
 look surprized; "and possibly you might  
 "have had the first of her if she had  
 "been fairly dealt with: but I will leave  
 "the blushing devil to tell her own sto-  
 "ry; I shall then know if she deceives  
 "you: though, I swear, I do not think  
 "it will be in her power, she has con-  
 "ceived such a violent inclination for  
 "you."

"That's odd," replied Sir Charles,  
 "as I never saw her before last night."

"Perhaps not; but *she* saw *you* with me  
 "at the play, and asked after you with  
 "such encomiums on the elegance of  
 "your *person*, and the grace of your  
 "manner, that you have made a prodigi-  
 "ous impression, indeed."

"Pshaw, nonsense," cried Sir Charles  
 "—I am very unfortunate," added he,  
 sighing,

fighting, "in pleasing those whom I  
"cannot love, and in not being able to  
"soften the only heart which I wish to  
"subdue."

"Well, but is not Lucy a delicious  
"little creature?"

"She is pretty, and there is something  
"very engaging in her behaviour: but  
"I have no design to enter into any con-  
"nections of the kind you hinted at—If I  
"can be of any service to her, I will,  
"but—"

"You promised, however, to see her  
"this morning;" interrupted Brudenel,  
—"Do not let me hinder you."

"No—I said some time to-day—I  
"shall not go till after dinner."

Sir Charles kept his word, and found  
her very invitingly dressed.—She met  
him with a tender but modest satisfaction  
in her looks—"I would not, Sir," said  
she, "have received you here again, after



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“ your generosity to me, but that I feared to go out in search of a better place, lest I should miss the visit with which you promised to favour me: but if you will still have the goodness to come and see me, I will remove, to-morrow, to an apartment more proper for your reception: it is highly fitting that the money which you have bestowed upon me should be employed to shew my gratitude.”

“ There is no occasion for your so employing it,” replied Sir Charles, “ I gave it to you for your own convenience, and you will thank me in the best manner by taking no farther notice of it.”

“ I would not be undeserving,” said she, lifting up her fine eyes fearfully, “ of your liberality.—I have never, till now, met with such noble treatment from any of your sex: all with whom

“ I have

“ I have been hitherto acquainted have  
 “ cruelly deceived me: but there is so  
 “ much sincerity in your looks, that I  
 “ may, I hope, flatter myself, at last,  
 “ with having found a real friend.—Had  
 “ I found such a friend sooner, I should  
 “ not have been the wretch I am.”

A few tears, which, instead of diminishing, heightened her beauty, stole down her face, while she sighed out those words.

Sir Charles, then, desired her not to think of any thing disagreeable to her in the former part of her life, but to look forward; adding, that, if he could assist her in going into a more eligible way of living, she might command him.

So kind, so generous a declaration, drew a profusion of acknowledgements from her, and numberless praises for his munificence: but she assured him, that she was not a meritorious object.

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“ To convince you, Sir, that I do not  
 “ accuse myself wrongfully, I will inform  
 “ you by what means I was brought into  
 “ my present situation.”

“ My father was possessed of a place at  
 “ court : the income arising from it was  
 “ small, but he was obliged to make a  
 “ genteel appearance. During the life of  
 “ my mother, who was a good woman, we  
 “ lived very decently ; but she died, too  
 “ soon for me, just when I most wanted  
 “ her tenderest care. I was but sixteen,  
 “ Sir, when I lost her, and, for about half  
 “ a year, endeavoured to make my fa-  
 “ ther as happy as he could be without  
 “ her, as she was his only comfort. He,  
 “ in return, laid no restraint upon me,  
 “ but permitted me to associate with  
 “ other girls of my age and station in  
 “ life—Fatal indulgence ! Why—why  
 “ was it ever abused ! Though I call  
 “ Heaven to witness that I did not abuse  
 “ it

“ it intentionally.—My dear mother had  
 “ taught me to follow the strictest pre-  
 “ cepts of virtue ; had she been still my  
 “ exemplary guide, I might now have,  
 “ been happy ! But not to tire you, Sir ;  
 “ I went with some of my female compa-  
 “ nions to a ball in the neighbourhood,  
 “ at which I was chosen for a partner by  
 “ Sir Thomas R——. He was young,  
 “ and not disagreeable in his person : I  
 “ was lively and thoughtless : he appear-  
 “ ed to be vastly charmed with me, and  
 “ was not backward in telling me so :  
 “ but as the evening came on he grew  
 “ more and more violent in his professi-  
 “ ons of love, and insisted upon my go-  
 “ ing with him into another apartment,  
 “ with my companions, and accepting of  
 “ a supper. I opposed his importunities  
 “ as long as I could : but as they all  
 “ agreed to stay, I must have either suf-  
 “ fered Sir Thomas to go home with me,



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“ me, or have gone by myself — I  
“ thought it, therefore, safer to join the  
“ company with whom I came out : but  
“ I was mistaken — The villain infused a  
“ stupifying drug into the negus I drank,  
“ after which I could give no account of  
“ what passed ; but when I waked, found  
“ myself in bed with him at a bagnio.

“ It is utterly impossible for me to de-  
“ scribe my surprize and indignation  
“ when I discovered the condition I was  
“ in — I insisted upon being conveyed  
“ home to my father directly, who would,  
“ I was assured, I said, receive me, as  
“ I had not designedly been guilty of a  
“ criminal action ; but he found means  
“ to terrify me at the bare idea of being  
“ refused admittance, and, at last, by  
“ frightening and soothing me by turns,  
“ prevailed on me to go to his lodgings,  
“ where, for about half a year, he seem-  
“ ed to be very fond of me, and kept

“ me

“ me in the greatest elegance and splen-  
 “ dor; yet, as I never had been vicious-  
 “ ly inclined, I was not happy—I still  
 “ sighed after my home and my father,  
 “ and, one day, when I knew that Sir  
 “ Thomas was to be absent several  
 “ hours, I got into a Hackney coach,  
 “ ordered it to drive to my father’s, and  
 “ sent in my name—The maid came out,  
 “ and told me, that he had given strict  
 “ orders to refuse my admittance, as he  
 “ was determined never to see me  
 “ again.

“ So cruel a message, with the manner  
 “ in which it was delivered, stung me to  
 “ the quick—I did not think it possible  
 “ for my father to reject his child, with-  
 “ out hearing, at least, what she had to  
 “ say for herself; for when Sir Thomas  
 “ told me that it was in vain to attempt  
 “ returning home, I imagined that he  
 “ only said so to keep me more securely

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“ to himself: I, therefore, enquired no  
“ more after a parent who could abandon  
“ a daughter who had never, designedly,  
“ offended him, and who, in effect, owed  
“ her misconduct chiefly to his want of  
“ care.—But when I saw an account of  
“ his death, awhile afterwards, in the  
“ papers, I felt the severest affliction.

“ When I had a little recovered my-  
“ self, I enquired into the state of his af-  
“ fairs; I found that he died insolvent;  
“ there was, consequently, nothing for  
“ me to expect, but an increase of sor-  
“ row.

“ Soon after that event, Sir Thomas’s  
“ passion began to abate, and he, im-  
“ perceptibly, introduced a friend of his,  
“ who began to be very particular in his  
“ behaviour to me—My eyes were then  
“ opened to the designs of men—I spoke  
“ to Sir Thomas concerning the carriage  
“ of his friend; he returned no satisfac-  
“ tory

" tory reply, but left me the next day,  
 " under a pretence of going out of town  
 " for a fortnight; during which Mr.  
 " B—— was scarce ever absent from my  
 " lodgings, and proceeded to take im-  
 " proper liberties, as they were entirely  
 " inconsistent with the professions of  
 " friendship between him and Sir Tho-  
 " mas: I expressed great surprise; but  
 " how was I astonished, when he told me,  
 " that Sir Thomas had left him on pur-  
 " pose to give him an opportunity to  
 " make his way with me, and that, ex-  
 " cept I would listen to him, I might,  
 " possibly, be undone, as Sir Thomas  
 " would see me no more!

" Though that cutting decision of my  
 " fate was explained to me with all ima-  
 " ginable delicacy, and though the ut-  
 " terer of it strove to make himself agree-  
 " able by every soothing art in his power,  
 " my grief and shame were so extreme,  
 " that,



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“that, for a great while, I could not  
 “bring myself to comply with the ad-  
 “vantageous offers he addressed to me.  
 “—At length, however, not knowing  
 “whither to go; not having a single  
 “friend in the world, and being entirely  
 “deprived of my character, I submitted;  
 “and he treated me with the most win-  
 “ning tenderness.

“One day, on his appearing uncom-  
 “monly dejected, though more fond  
 “of me than ever, I expressed a desire to  
 “be acquainted with the sudden change.  
 “After some hesitation, he informed me,  
 “that his family had insisted upon his  
 “marrying, and—to increase his un-  
 “easiness—upon his giving, me up for  
 “ever: to increase his uneasiness, he re-  
 “peated the words, because he was not  
 “in any shape able to make any provision  
 “for me.

“You

“ You may be sure that I most sensibly  
 “ felt, before-hand, the change which I  
 “ was going to experience; though, to  
 “ confess the truth, I had never felt a real  
 “ passion for either of my admirers---  
 “ Love is not always in our power---Too  
 “ often,” added she, sighing and throw-  
 ing down her eyes, “ it surprizes us when  
 “ we the least expect.”

Here she paused, looking most inno-  
 cently confused, but finding that Sir  
 Charles took no notice of her ceasing to  
 speak---he was, indeed; thinking, at that  
 instant, about Mrs. Fermor---she pro-  
 ceeded in the following manner.

#### END OF THE FOURTH BOOK.

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B O O K V.

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“**M**R. B——, however, was so loth  
“ to part with me,” continued  
Lucy, “ that I could not be totally unaf-  
“ fected by the distress which he disco-  
“ vered.—He left about twenty guineas  
“ with me, by which I have been sup-  
“ ported till now, as I would not hear of  
“ any new proposals of the same nature :  
“ yet I knew not what method to take to  
“ extricate myself from a way of life so  
“ entirely disgusting to me.—But I can-  
“ not stop here,” (lifting up her eyes to  
him, with an expressive languor, and then  
throwing them down again) “ I must not,  
“ I cannot venture to displease the only  
“ man

“man in the world, whom I ever yet  
“wished to charm.”

Sir Charles, though not at all ignorant of the arts of a sex to whom he had never been averse, though he had not suffered either his constitution or fortune to be injured by his commerce with them, was, for once, duped by this designing girl; for he actually believed her sincere in desiring to quit a profession so contrary to virtue; and, therefore, very freely offered a handsome sum with which she might settle herself in the manner most suitable to her taste: and added, that, were he to advise, he would recommend her going into the country, or to any place where she was not known, as the most eligible scheme he could propose to her.

A deep sigh was all her reply: of which, when he hastily demanded the cause, she, after some difficulty and much confusion,



confusion, told him, that she should ever think herself greatly indebted to him for his generous offer: "But," continued she, covered with blushes, "I must confess that the wealth of worlds, at a distance from You, would make me miserable; allow me only a trifle, Sir," (looking bewitchingly tender at him) "but send me not far from you: let me be near you, let your allowance be ever so small. — Indeed, it will not be possible for me to exist without seeing you sometimes."

Though this language was pretty plain; much plainer than Sir Charles either expected or desired, yet it was delivered with such delicacy of utterance, accompanied with so many alluring looks, and such innocence of manners, that, as things were circumstanced, at so critical a moment, it was irresistible and decisive. — Sir Charles yielding to the all-powerful

powerful attractions with which so much beauty and sensibility combined, enabled Lucy to conquer a youthful heart, perfectly alive to pleasure.

For a few moments he even forgot Mrs. Fermor : but he soon remembered all his interviews with her ; remembered them with increasing ardor.

“ Heaven’s !” cried he, when Fancy pictured her to his views, “ what would  
 “ I not give to be clasped in the arms of  
 “ that amiable woman, to be pressed to  
 “ the bosom of that enchanting creature,  
 “ with the warmth, with the rapture of  
 “ a Lucy !--- Oh ! how tasteless, how insipid is every joy, in which *she* has no  
 “ share ! --- Yet how can I do her so great  
 “ an injury as even to *think* of her at the  
 “ same instant with that poor unhappy  
 “ girl, who, wretched as she is, loves  
 “ me ; loves me passionately ?---And will  
 “ not Mrs. Fermor, when she hears of  
 “ my

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" my connections with her, will she not  
 " despise and abhor me ? Drive me from  
 " her presence with detestation ? Oh, no !  
 " she is all gentleness, as well as all pu-  
 " rity--- She will pity this indiscreet girl,  
 " but she will blame me : and is not her  
 " disapprobation a sufficient punish-  
 " ment ? I cannot bear the thoughts of  
 " it : all that I can plead in my behalf is,  
 " that I had not taken a single step to-  
 " wards corrupting this girl ; and I will  
 " use my best endeavours to reclaim  
 " her."

With so laudable a determination he  
 retired to rest in his own house, and  
 awaked in the morning with the same  
 commendable resolution.--- But how vain  
 are the resolves of human beings !

As he had staid with Lucy till the  
 night was far advanced, he did not rise  
 the next day till towards noon : before  
 he could dress, Brudenel came to break-  
 fast

fast with him, and to ask him how he liked the pretty toad.

Sir Charles, never, from the first, pleased with the part which he had acted in this affair, strove to turn it off, but Brudenel would not be satisfied with an evasive answer.

While he was endeavouring to draw Sir Charles out, and to render him more explicit upon a subject on which he himself always expatiated with pleasure, a note was delivered to Sir Charles from Lucy, in which she informed him that she had hired an elegant apartment, and begged to see him as soon as possible in order to have his approbation.

Sir Charles, who intended to visit her again, but not till he had taken time to consider of the best method of providing for her, sent a verbal answer, that he was, he believed, engaged for that evening, but



but would take another opportunity to wait on her.

Brudenel, catching up the note, cried, "Nay, prithee, do not be cruel to a poor little creature who doats on you — What a pretty tender note has she written, Charles! Surely it well deserved another sort of an answer."

Sir Charles seemed to take no notice of what he heard, but gave a turn to the conversation.

When breakfast was over, Brudenel left him.

Very soon after his departure a second note arrived, still more tenderly, more delicately worded, in which she intreated to see him only for a moment; as she had something of consequence to communicate to him—He resolved, therefore, to call on her, in his way to Sir George Ruffel, with whom he intended to spend the evening.

He

He ordered his chariot to stop at her new lodgings, and ran up stairs, designing only to stay a quarter of an hour; but she received him with such transports, and strove by so many various arts to render herself captivating, that he was persuaded to stay and to partake of her supper; before the arrival of which she told him, she should have been quite in despair if he had not come, as she dreaded his hearing a secret, which, if divulged by any other person, might prejudice him against her, who was, in no shape, to blame.

She then informed him, that Brudene!, with whom she became acquainted while she was kept by Mr. B——, had, upon her being struck with the sight of Sir Charles at the play, imparted to her a design which he had formed to draw him from a lady who was, he thought, unworthy of him; which design she had

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had fallen into merely to be connected with a man so every way desirable---

"But I never intended to keep the secret from you," added she with an inviting smile, "I love you too passionately, too sincerely to deceive you, and I died with desire to inform you of it, having, through my fondness for you, last night forgot it: you shall never find me either deceitful or ungrateful," continued she, with a tender sigh, and with a look which marked every passion of her soul: "only do not abandon me, Sir Charles, do not desert a girl who never loved any man but you, and who loves you more than she can express."

A shower of tears fell from her eyes when she had concluded her speech.

Sir Charles was touched by them sufficiently to feel a strong inclination to put a stop to them.

He

He threw his arm round her neck, and asked her why she talked in that manner; desiring her to be easy and chearful, and to depend upon his settling her in a way more agreeable to her.

“It is that which disturbs me,” said she, still weeping.

“How, Lucy,” said Sir Charles, “have you all this while only affected contrition for your past errors? And are you not willing to quit a style of life into which you was, as you have told me, treacherously seduced?”

“I am willing,” replied she, “to quit every thing in the world, and every living creature, but you---The thoughts of being separated from you, though you generously talk of providing for me, in a proper manner, terrify me. I have no trouble,



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“no joy about any thing but the pleasing you : I am well contented to live where you chuse, either in town or country : if I see nobody, except you, I shall be satisfied ; I shall be happy—I cannot bear to think of being deprived of your dear company, for in that is all my joy, my delight, my consolation.”

“But you know, my dear Lucy,” replied Sir Charles, moved with her tenderness, “that my continuing to visit you will not accord with the manner of life which you had, I imagined, consented to lead, if I advanced a sum sufficient to procure an agreeable retreat for you, equally removed from vice and want, and abounding with all the requisites for peace and plenty.”

“What peace can there be,” said she warmly, “at a distance from the man  
“whom

"whom more than peace I love?  
 "What plenty can recompense me  
 "for the absence of the darling of my  
 "soul? I was desired, indeed, to pre-  
 "tend to love you, but alas! I loved  
 "you voluntarily, from the first mo-  
 "ment I saw you; and your generosi-  
 "ty, added to your endearments, have  
 "only raised it to such a height, that,  
 "without some return, it will drive  
 "me to absolute madness—No, Sir  
 "Charles," continued she, with a  
 "melancholy kind of firmness, "do not  
 "think of sending me from you ere I  
 "can submit to a separation; I shall die  
 "at your feet."

She then sunk down before him on  
 her knees, and, with uplifted hands,  
 and eyes streaming with tears, and  
 with a bosom heaving with undissemb-  
 led sighs, begged him never more to  
 talk in so cruel a strain.

It was impossible for Sir Charles, as he had not an adamant heart, to resist a kneeling beauty, in the pride of youth, whose personal attractions were powerfully accompanied by the melting eloquence of sighs and tears, apparently arising from the tenderness of an ardent passion, too great to be expressed by a profusion of words.

He raised her from the ground, placed her in his lap, and, while her head reclined on his shoulder, soothed her beating breast to peace, and, by a thousand kind caresses, convinced her, that though she was not the object of his choice, it was not in his nature to use her ill.—Delighted to have so far gained her point, she made the most of her charms, and she had really none of the disgusting manners so common to women in her situation, but was indisputably possessed of a delicacy

licacy superior to the majority of her sex, and had also a violent passion for Sir Charles, in the indulgence of which she found so much pleasure as she made no efforts to conceal it, that she actually won upon him, sometimes by smiles, ever at command, ever bewitching; and sometimes by tears, equally at command, and not less enchanting, as to render him, good-natured, generous, amorous as he was, almost unable to refuse the acceptance of her offered love.

During three weeks, therefore, was he alternately distracted by reflections; by reflections on Mrs. Fermor's discouraging behaviour to him, when absent from his Lucy, and by tender compassion for the poor girl when she sighed with delight over the charms of his person, or wept in despair at the thoughts of being deprived of the en-



dearments which she had, by her love and her distress, in a great measure forced from him.

As Lucy lived always dreadfully apprehensive of being abandoned by him, she was frequently melancholy and dejected; to divert her dejection he sometimes took her out with him in his chaise, for a day to Richmond, Windsor, &c. &c. in which excursions no kind of luxury was spared to banish care, to promote pleasure, and excite the passions: the evenings of those days he generally spent with her alone.

Though the days and nights thus filled up were entirely to the taste of a girl intoxicated with love for one of the finest young fellows in the world, the fear of his seeing Mrs. Fermor frequently seized her, in the midst of her enjoyments,

enjoyments, filling her with jealousy and anxiety.

It will not be improper here to mention *that* lady, and to inform the readers of these sheets what effect the absence of Sir Charles had upon her.

When Sir Charles bade Mrs. Fermor adieu, though it was very evident that he was in a violent agitation, his agitated appearance was nothing new to her, as she had, of late, often observed it; she paid, therefore, no particular attention to it. But when he had been gone a day or two she began to miss him, and to be sensible of an absence which she had never felt before.

Sir Charles, as his passion increased, had certainly been more constantly with her, had taken more pains than ever to please, and had succeeded; yet she little imagined, while he so con-

stantly visited her, that she should have been so uneasy at the loss of his company: she would have, indeed, laughed at any body who, taking notice of the manner in which they spent their time together, had told her so: but the hours during which she was accustomed to see Sir Charles passed away heavily enough; they really became so tedious to her that she grew alarmed at her feelings, and half angry with herself for sensations which she could neither approve of nor controul.—She took herself fairly to task: and freely blamed herself for having suffered him ever to visit her so often. “Wherein, however, have I been faulty? Must a woman who has a taste for conversation be entirely deprived of the company of an entertaining and intelligent man, who is well bred, takes no improper liberties, and exactly conforms

“ forms to the rules which she imposes  
 “ upon him? But then, if the con-  
 “ versation of that man grows so inter-  
 “ esting as to incline her to wish to see  
 “ him oftener than is consistent with  
 “ discretion, or to render his absence  
 “ disagreeable, would she not act pru-  
 “ dently to retrench her satisfactions  
 “ before they arise to such an height as  
 “ to make them inconvenient? Yet is  
 “ there no inconvenience arising from  
 “ finding Sir Charles Leusum’s com-  
 “ pany agreeable: the uneasiness pro-  
 “ ceeds from desiring a continuation  
 “ of it.—He happens, it is true, to be  
 “ pleased with chatting to me, just at  
 “ this time; but is it, therefore, pro-  
 “ bable, that he should like to chat  
 “ with me always? Is he not young  
 “ and volatile? And is it likely that he  
 “ should perpetually desire to associ-  
 “ ate with a woman who lives quite



" out of the world ; who sees nothing,  
 " hears nothing, knows nothing of  
 " what is doing : is it to be expected  
 " that a fine, handsome, lively young  
 " fellow, should bury himself in the  
 " country, and murder so many hours  
 " with her ? May he not be engaged,  
 " for the future, in a thousand joyous  
 " schemes ? or may he not marry ? or  
 " if he is still willing to muse away life  
 " now and then in a corner with a wo-  
 " man, may he not be sick ? may not  
 " death, notwithstanding his youth,  
 " snatch him from her for ever ?"

She shuddered at the last suggestion;  
 but, after having reasoned a moment  
 with herself, on the extreme probabi-  
 lity that her fears were well founded,  
 and, at the same time, on her utter  
 inability to prevent what she feared,  
 she took up her work with great com-  
 posure,

posure, and strove to think of something else.

Sir Charles had, indeed, during his stay in town, endeavoured also to think of something else, yet could not all the blandishments of the beautiful and enamoured Lucy drive Mrs. Fermor from his mind.—If he ceased to think of her for one moment, she only returned with ten times more force to his imagination: and whenever he left Lucy, after all the caresses which she had lavished on him, it was only to sigh more fervently for the same proofs of tenderness from Mrs. Fermor. The disapprobation, also, which he knew that she must discover at his manner of living with that girl, began to torment him night and day.—“How can I,” said he, “any longer pretend to a woman, of whom I have rendered myself so unworthy?”

"Can I ever ask her again? Can I  
 "ever hope that she will marry a man  
 "who absolutely keeps another wo-  
 "man? How absurd, how indelicate  
 "must I appear to her? In a still  
 "worse light must I appear to her, if  
 "my conduct, blameable as it is,  
 "should be misinterpreted by re-  
 "port.—She does not know that  
 "compassion for this poor love-sick  
 "girl, influenced me, more than a  
 "desire to possess the beauties of her  
 "person—but I cannot," continued  
 he, "bear that she should be imposed  
 "upon.—She shall never be deceived  
 "by me.—I will fly to her, and at her  
 "feet confess all my follies, and beg  
 "her forgiveness.—By so doing, I  
 "shall, possibly, deserve her esteem,  
 "though I may never gain her love."

Full of those thoughts, he deter-  
 mined to quit Lucy for ever; but as  
 he

he knew how much pain it would give her, and how many arguments she would make use of to prevail on him not to abandon her, he resolved to go off without taking any other leave of her, than by a note, which he, with a bill for five hundred pounds, slipped into one of her dressing-boxes on the morning of his departure.

Just as he was going to step into his post-chaise, Brudenel came to see him, and desired him to allow him a moment's attention for the communication of something of importance.

"What can be sufficiently important," cried Sir Charles, "to detain me a moment longer from the friend of my heart, if she will, after all my follies, condescend to receive me?"

"I now call on you, on *her* account," said Brudenel. "Sit down, Sir



“ Sir Charles, and hear me.—Your  
 “ inclination for this woman, to tell  
 “ you the truth, appeared to me so  
 “ ridiculous, that I sincerely pitied  
 “ you, and determined, if possible, to  
 “ save you from a mercenary crea-  
 “ ture, as I believed her to be, who  
 “ had merely a design upon your for-  
 “ tune.—With this view, I flung  
 “ Lucy in your way, whom I well  
 “ knew to be one of the safest of her  
 “ sex in *her* sphere of life, and who  
 “ fortunately assisted me in the ac-  
 “ complishment of my scheme, by be-  
 “ ing charmed with you to a degree  
 “ of intoxication. I knew, also, that  
 “ I could trust you with her, because  
 “ your prior attachment would keep  
 “ you from being too much engaged  
 “ with her, at least till I had made all  
 “ proper enquiries relating to Mrs.  
 “ Fermor, which I found I could do,

“ as you had mentioned some of her  
 “ husband’s companions, with whom  
 “ I am also at this time acquainted.  
 “ Perfectly satisfied with what I have  
 “ heard, I come willingly to assure  
 “ you, that every word she has told  
 “ you concerning herself, is strictly  
 “ true.—No body bears a better cha-  
 “ racter; she was a very amiable wo-  
 “ man at the time of her husband’s  
 “ death.—Her fortune is extremely  
 “ narrow, and she is too old for you;  
 “ but, if you have no objection to her  
 “ age, I have, certainly, no business  
 “ with it. Thus, you see, Sir Charles,  
 “ I have been labouring for your  
 “ good: you will, I know, be gene-  
 “ rous to poor Lucy, whatever turn  
 “ things take; but I believe the little  
 “ devil will break her heart for you.”

“ I thank you, dear George, for  
 “ your love,” replied Sir Charles in a  
 hurrying

hurrying tone, "but I cannot stay a moment longer: I cannot any longer exist without the sight of my dear, amiable Mrs. Fermor: I never doubted her veracity; she is truth itself.—Adieu, Brudenel; I will write to you when I am settled at the Manor, but *I must* leave you now."

With that reply, he stepped into his carriage, and drove off to Mrs. Fermor's.

Mrs. Fermor had just been reading a book which he had lent to her when he was down before, and the recollection of a very judicious remark of his upon a particular passage in it, made her think so strongly of the loss of his conversation, that an involuntary sigh issued from her gentle bosom.

Shocked to find herself so much affected, she threw away the book, and,

and, catching up her work in a hurry, was endeavouring, by employment, to drive such ideas from her mind, when a rap at the door occasioned so violent a palpitation at her heart, that she could hardly rise to receive him.

Vexed and ashamed of being so unusually disconcerted, a blush overspread her face, and very much heightened her complexion.

Sir Charles, eager to discover, by his reception, if she had heard of his follies, and was offended with him, or not, attended only to her features, which wore a most pleasing appearance: her face, indeed, was lighted up with smiles, which she could not help shewing, at his approach, and her eyes sparkled with joy: such joy as she had never felt before.

Sir



Sir Charles thought he had never seen her look so handsome, nor seemingly so glad to see him.

Nothing, 'tis true, expressive of gladness, fell from her lips, but her whole behaviour declared a satisfaction which gave her every moment new charms in the eyes of her lover; who, unwilling to cause a change in a behaviour so very agreeable to him, refrained from informing her, that night, of what she was, he found, ignorant, and deferred till next day the disclosure of a confession of what she would not, he knew, approve, though he hoped to obtain her pardon, from the natural sweetness of her disposition, as well as from the sincerity of his repentance.

Accordingly he took an early opportunity, the next day, to thank her for having received him in so flattering

ing a manner on the preceding evening.

That little speech caused a sudden glow in her face, as she began to fear that she had been too obliging; but she was soon convinced of her error, by his adding, " Though I have not  
 " deserved the indulgence you have  
 " shewn me, Mrs. Fermor, I am  
 " above deceiving you: yet, I will  
 " take the most solemn oath never to  
 " be guilty of the same folly again;  
 " and I am, I think, well enough ac-  
 " quainted with the excellence of  
 " your heart, to be certain that, when  
 " you hear my motives, I shall merit  
 " your forgiveness."

" You are, in no shape, accountable  
 " to me for your conduct, Sir Charles,"  
 said she, still confused at so strange a  
 preamble.

" I am

“ I am more so to you, Madam,” replied he, “ than to any other person : as you are and ever will be the mistress of my heart, you have a right to know every secret of it. I shall, therefore, make my confession in the most exact manner possible, that you may the better judge of the sincerity of my penitence.”—He then delivered a minute detail of his adventure with Lucy—with timidity he delivered it, but with a grace and delicacy peculiar to himself.

Mrs. Fermor listened with attention.—The first part of his narrative occasioned a seriousness of aspect, which alarmed him ; but, when he had finished it, and discovered the real joy which filled his heart at having got rid of a woman, who was rather a trouble than a pleasure to him,  
an

an unexpected satisfaction made her bosom throb, and threw so many smiles into her gladdened countenance, that Sir Charles was quite entraptured.

When she had testified her approbation of his making so handsome a provision for Lucy, he cried out, with a transported tone, "You forgive me, then, my dear Mrs. Fer-  
 "mor? You approve of my kindness  
 "to that poor girl? What happiness  
 "is it to obtain your pardon for a  
 "fault, for the commission of which,  
 "I shall always despise myself!"

"Why, to confess the truth, Sir  
 "Charles," said she, "I do not know  
 "any thing of which a man of sensi-  
 "bility and humanity should be  
 "more ashamed, than the gaining the  
 "affections of a woman, with whom  
 "he is, in his own mind, determined  
 "to have no honourable connec-  
 "tions.



“ tions.—Will you not allow that no-  
 “ thing can be more cruel than such  
 “ a behaviour ?”

“ I will allow that every word you  
 “ say is right, my dear Mrs. Fermor,”  
 said he ; “ but pray, will you not also  
 “ confess that it is equally cruel to  
 “ gain the affections of a man whom  
 “ you never intend to marry ?

“ I do,” replied she, blushing.

“ What, then, have you not to an-  
 “ swer for ?” cried he, taking her  
 hand, and looking passionately at  
 her. “ Have you not seduced my  
 “ heart, and taken entire possession of  
 “ it ? Have you not hitherto refused  
 “ to make me any reparation for it ?  
 “ Have I not, therefore, reason to  
 “ hope for some kind of satisfaction  
 “ from the open avowal of your ex-  
 “ cellent principles ?”

“ But

“But I do not plead guilty,” said she, laughing, and withdrawing her hand.—“I have, neither directly nor indirectly, endeavoured to make any sort of impression upon you.”

“Oh! you charming deceiver,” replied he.—“But if you can really affirm, honestly, that you have not had any sinister intention, you only prove that your power is the greater, and that you can compass, without any design at all, what other women, with their most subtle arts, cannot arrive at.”

They were interrupted, in the beginning of a conversation which promised to be very lively (Mrs. Fermor, indeed, never had appeared so thoroughly chearful) by a servant of Sir Charles's, who came to tell him that a young lady was come down in a post-

post-chaise, and desired to see him immediately.

Sir Charles, extremely surprized, asked abundance of questions, and seemed very unwilling to go home, believing the new visitor might, probably, be some friend of Lady G—'s, late Miss Hill; the Earl of G— having died while he was in town.— Sir George Russel, too, had told him, in confidence, that he might possibly receive overtures from the widow, as it was well known that she had been, in a manner, forced to marry Lord G—, and had ever retained a strong esteem for *him*.

Sir Charles, having determined to marry no woman but Mrs. Fermor, wanted to put off seeing this unknown, but *supposed* lady; and asked the servant, with angry accents, what business he had to say where he was?—

“ I was

"I was abroad; and you should have  
"said so."

"We could not tell what to do,"  
replied the man, obsequiously, "the  
"lady was so very earnest to see you,  
"as it was upon business of conse-  
"quence, she said: so we we were  
"afraid of doing wrong in not letting  
"you know."

Sir Charles, never more displeased  
at being called away, as he was in the  
middle of a conversation which seemed  
to grow interesting, went home, more  
out of humour with his servants, than  
they had ever seen him, as he was  
very good-natured, and rarely re-  
proved them, but for capital omis-  
sions. His surprize, however, was  
equal to his vexation; for when he



entered the hall, Lucy, at that instant, flew to him from the parlour, and, in an agony of tears, begged him to hear her, to pity her, and not to abandon her for ever. Sir Charles, who at all times would have wished to avoid such a scene, but who was particularly unwilling to have it exhibited before his servants, led her back again into the parlour, and then expressed the greatest astonishment at seeing her there, after the intelligence which he had communicated to her in the note left by him in her dressing-drawer; adding, that it was quite improper for him to see her again.

“Too well, I know that you think so,” cried she, interrupting him, “but though the tenderness which you

“pretended

“ *pretended* for me (it was never real,”  
 continued she with a deep sigh) “ is  
 “ over, the impression which your  
 “ charming person, and insinuating  
 “ manners, have made on my fool-  
 “ ish, fond heart, will never be  
 “ erased.—I *must* be miserable. But  
 “ though you cannot *love* me, Sir  
 “ Charles, yet, surely, I cannot be so  
 “ very much the object of your ha-  
 “ tred, as to make you think it neces-  
 “ sary never to see me again.—My  
 “ heart,” added she, with a dying  
 languor, “ yearned to thank you, to  
 “ pour forth its gratitude for your  
 “ generous present, and I could not  
 “ exist a moment, till I had expressed  
 “ my acknowledgments.”

E 2 “ A line

“A line or two would have been quite sufficient,” cried he coolly, “if you imagined you owed me any thanks.”

Seeing her, then, change colour, from a deadly pale to a deep crimson, “But if it will not do to place you in a way of life agreeable to your desire,” continued he, “I will make an addition to it.”

Before Sir Charles had spoke those few last words, the indifference of his behaviour had awakened a little resentment in the lady, and she felt her face flush with anger; but his increased generosity made it instantly subside.

She burst into a second, and more violent flood of tears.—“Cruel!” said she

she to him, (her voice being almost stifled with the emotions which she endured) "I want nothing from you, but what, to my misfortune, it is not, I see, in your power to give; your heart.—If that is, *indeed*, estranged from me for ever, in pity, oh, in pity to the pangs I feel, feign but a little love for me, and I shall be easy."

"I cannot, cannot grant your request," said he, "it is impossible for me to comply with it.—Compose yourself, therefore, and go home;—fully assured, however, that though I can never be your lover; though I will never see you again, yet I will be your friend: and if any new misfortunes threaten



“you, inform me of them by letter,  
 “and I will find means, if means *can*  
 “be found, to extricate you from  
 “them.”

“My friend!” cried she, reddening  
 again with love and anger, “my  
 “friend! and not see me?—Gracious  
 “G—d!” continued she, clapping  
 her hands together, “What, what  
 “have I done to you, to provoke you  
 “to treat me with a coldness so con-  
 “trary to your nature?—But I see,  
 “see plainly, the cause of this altera-  
 “tion in your carriage.—You are re-  
 “turned to your Mrs. Fermor.—She,  
 “she is the source of all my misery.”

Sir Charles, stung to the quick at  
 hearing the mistress of his heart re-  
 flected upon by a girl of Lucy’s cha-  
 racter,

rafter, could hardly curb his passion.—He tried, with the strongest efforts, to keep it down, but said with a commanding air, “ I must insist  
 “ upon your never mentioning that  
 “ lady to me, nor to any body else.—  
 “ She is entirely unknown to you, and  
 “ will ever remain so.”

“ No Sir,” replied she, darting a look of rage and indignation at him from her beautiful eyes, “ She is not  
 “ unknown to me : I well know she  
 “ is the cunning devil who has seduced you from me : but I swear  
 “ by all that is dear to me, that  
 “ she shall not long enjoy a happiness I would die to be possessed  
 “ of.”

Then her voice fell into a melting softness, and she sunk in a swoon upon his bosom.

Alarmed at the new turn of her behaviour, though he imputed it to artifice, (but it was really not counterfeited) he took her in his arms, and placing her gently on the sofa, endeavoured, by opening her handkerchief, and applying *Eau de luce* to her nose, to bring her to herself: but to no purpose.

Finding that she remained in a kind of convulsive fit, he just stepped out at the parlour door, and bade his servants, to whom he did not chuse to expose her, send Loyd, the house-keeper, whom Mrs. Fermor had recommended to him.—As soon as

Loyd

Loyd appeared, he desired her to do every thing in her power to restore the poor girl to her senses.

Mrs. Loyd, who was one of the best creatures in the world, very diligently applied salts, hartshorn and cold water, alternately;—the *last* application made Lucy open her eyes.

Seeing only that good woman, as Sir Charles stood behind the sofa, (he would indeed have left her totally to the care of his housekeeper, had he not feared that she might mention Mrs. Fermor improperly) she attempted to rise hastily, crying, “ And  
“ so he has left me in the midst of my  
“ distress? A distress into which I fell  
“ merely through love of him; but I  
“ will be revenged,” continued she,



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throwing her eyes wildly about,  
“ though I perish in the attempt. — I  
“ cannot support the anguish which I  
“ feel, it is intense, it is intolerable.”

Sir Charles, then, advanced towards  
her.

Eagerly looking up in his face,  
“ Tell me, Sir,” said she, “ tell me, I  
“ beseech you, what I have done to  
“ render myself thus loathsome to  
“ you.”

“ Nothing,” replied he : “ only be  
“ composed : let me persuade you to  
“ go home. — Loyd, is the chaise at  
“ the door ?”

Loyd intelligently considered that  
query as an order for her dismissal,  
and went out of the room.

“ Come,”

"Come," said he to Lucy, "let me conduct you to your carriage.—  
"I will furnish Brudenel with instructions to pay you two hundred more."

"Brudenel is a villain," cried she, staring with a frantic air, "and"—continued she, drawing out a pocket-knife, "you are—Oh! Leusum! What are you?"

"I will tell you," replied he, calmly, "when you have given to me that instrument, which ill becomes so soft an hand in that posture."

"It will not be long there," said she, (her eyes sparkling with fury) "I will sheath it in *your* bosom, and then in *my own*." "Nay then," said

Sir Charles, "I must endeavour to  
disarm you."

The struggles which ensued between them, made so much noise, that Loyd and the servants, who waited without, who adored their master, and who did not like the behaviour of his visiter, rushed into the room.

Upon their entrance, Lucy sprung from Sir Charles, who was just ready to seize the knife, and made a thrust at him, which he parried with dexterity, and got possession of her weapon.

He gave it directly to one of the servants who surrounded him, while two others secured her.

It would be difficult to say whether rage, disappointment, or love, was most strongly painted upon her countenance

tenance at this time.—Had not the men prevented her fall, she would have dropped on the floor.

By Sir Charles's order, however, they seated her on the sofa, and, in consequence of a sign from him, quitted their hold: otherwise they would not have left her so soon; so lively was their regard for their master.

She sat a few moments with her eyes rivetted to the floor, as if she was absorbed in thought. Then, lifting them up, all at once, expressive of the sincerest grief, and the strongest remorse, "How dare I," said she, "with a voice softened to the most melting tenderness, look on you?"

"How



“How can I expect that you should  
 “listen a moment to a wretch, who,  
 “at the very time she would have died  
 “to preserve your life, attempted  
 “cruelly to destroy it? But, believe  
 “me, Sir Charles, however absurd,  
 “however unaccountable so extrava-  
 “gant an action may appear, it pro-  
 “ceeded from the extremity of my  
 “love.—I could not bear the racking  
 “reflection that you left me for ano-  
 “ther.—The bare idea, even now,  
 “almost drives me to distraction.—  
 “Yet I will, if possible, be calm  
 “while I remain here: you want me  
 “gone, I plainly see.—I know the  
 “cause—to my sorrow, to my shame,  
 “I know it.—My happy rival!—but  
 “I cannot, nay, I will not go till I am  
 “forgiven;

"forgiven; if such a wretch, such a  
 "poor despised wretch, such a con-  
 "temptible, miserable creature as I  
 "am, may dare to expect your par-  
 "don.—I well know the excellence of  
 "your temper; you are too good,"  
 added she, sighing bitterly, "to be-  
 "stow a thought upon such a  
 "worthless, poor, abject, undone be-  
 "ing as you now see me.—A being,  
 "whom, though you could not love,  
 "you never injured, never deceived.—  
 "You rather strove to assist me, even  
 "when I would have plunged an in-  
 "strument of death into your heart.—  
 "Yet, Sir Charles, believe me, on  
 "my knees I swear," (sinking down at  
 his feet) "that at the very moment  
 "I attempted to take away your life,  
 "I loved

“ I loved you with the greatest ardour.—Oh ! pity, pity, if you cannot forgive me.”

Farther utterance was prevented by the most heart-breaking sighs, and the most violent sobbings.

Sir Charles, touched to the soul at her deplorable condition, kindly raised her from the ground, replaced her on the sofa, assured her of his entire forgiveness, and only begged in return, that she would give reason leave to operate upon her mind.—

“ Consider, coolly,” said he, “ our different situations ; you will then see the glaring impropriety of a longer connexion between us : consent to go home, and be certain that you may, by a right way of thinking, make

“ make me your friend : while you  
 “ act with tolerable discretion, I can-  
 “ not be your enemy.”

These words, uttered with a most  
 compassionate tone, and accompanied  
 by a gentle pressure of her hand,  
 restored her, in some measure, to the  
 possession of her intellects : the terri-  
 ble idea, however, of parting with  
 him for ever, was almost insup-  
 portable.

He then took her hand in order to  
 lead her to the chaise.

Just when she got without the par-  
 lour door, she was seized with a tre-  
 mor, which affected her whole frame :  
 her limbs failed her, and she would  
 have sunk a second time to the floor,  
 had



had not Sir Charles caught her in his arms.

He was obliged to carry her back again; and was closely followed by Loyd and the other servants, who were afraid to trust their master alone with her.

She soon recovered, and strove to recollect herself.

“Excuse this trouble which I give you, Sir Charles,” said she weeping; “after what has passed, you may be sure that I am not in my perfect senses—I am better now: but, before I go, permit me to take my final leave of you.”

Sir Charles very readily advanced to salute her.

She

She threw, sighing, her arms about him, and said, with a clear voice, and in solemn accents, " May the  
 " great G—d of H——n for ever,  
 " for ever bless you, and make you  
 " as happy, as you have made me,  
 " though I believe altogether unde-  
 " signedly, miserable." ON THIS WORD

" I never designed to make any  
 " persons wretched," said he, " espe-  
 " cially those who wished me happi-  
 " ness;—and, to convince you that  
 " I fully intend to do every thing in  
 " my power to hush this tempest in  
 " your mind, give me leave to send  
 " D'Anvers to town with you ; (that  
 " was the name of his GENTLEMAN)  
 " I shall not be easy till I hear of your  
 " being more composed ; and com-  
 posure

"posure cannot, I know, be acquired in a moment"

Such a tender concern about her, tended more to restore her reason, than all that he had yet said to her.

She again thanked him in terms so pathetically grateful, that they almost drew tears from him, and from all his domestics.

Seeing, however, that Sir Charles wished her departure, and not being willing, after the lenity with which he had treated her, to give him any farther vexation at that time, she rose up, of her own accord, to go.

She rose up, but she trembled in such a manner, that she could hardly reach the gate.

Sir

Sir Charles supported her to the carriage, and just before she entered it, "One dear, one last embrace," said she tenderly, but modestly kissing him.

He then lifted her into the chaise.

She waved her hand.—She strove to speak—in vain.

As soon as Mr. D'Anvers had seated himself by her side, and received his master's directions, to be careful in seeing her safe home, the carriage was whirled away with the utmost rapidity.

Sir Charles had hardly leisure to recover himself, and to think of returning to Mrs. Fermor, when a chariot and four stopped at his gate, with an old friend, the sight of whom  
would



would have been extremely welcome at any other time; but with whose company he could then have dispensed, as he was very impatient to inform Mrs. Fermor of the strange adventure he had met with. He was under a necessity, however, of postponing the communication of his intelligence, for the gentleman was already in the drawing-room.

Mrs. Loyd seeing him look embarrassed, as he was advancing to receive his new visiter, stopped him with great humility, and said, "that she took the liberty of asking, if he had any objection to her going to spend the afternoon with her good friend Mrs. Fermor, as she had promised, if he did not go himself?"

I

"Not

“Not the least objection, Loyd,”  
said he; “on the contrary, I should  
“be glad if you would tell her all that  
“has passed since I left her, which I  
“am now unluckily prevented from  
“doing myself.”

Loyd, delighted with the winning  
affability of her dear and ever-ho-  
noured master, as she styled him,  
made her humble curt’sy, and posted  
away to her friend, who having heard  
a strange confused report of a bustle  
at the manor, by which Sir Charles’s  
life had been endangered, was alarm-  
ed, and just going to send to know  
the truth of it.

The house-keeper, full of her mai-  
ter’s hazardous situation, began to  
tell her story, rather in a round-about  
manner,

manner, but, however, so much to the honour of her master, and with so much compassion for Lucy's unrequited love, that it forced tears from the eyes of Mrs. Fermor, the traces of which remained, when Sir Charles, having got rid of his visiter, made his appearance.

At the entrance of her master, Loyd instantly retired.

Sir Charles went up directly to Mrs. Fermor, and looking earnestly at her, "You seem troubled, madam," said he, with an air of disquietude: "nothing, I hope, has happened to give you any uneasiness."

"Nothing," replied she, with a look of exquisite complacency, "but the danger you have been in, and the melancholy

“melancholy condition of that poor  
 “unfortunate girl, who must cer-  
 “tainly have been deprived of her  
 “senses, when she attempted to take  
 “away your life.”

“I am happy, indeed, madam,”  
 said he, “beyond my expectation  
 “happy, if any evil threatened  
 “against me, has drawn tears from  
 “those dear eyes; but may I really  
 “flatter myself, Mrs. Fermor,” con-  
 tinued he, looking fondly at her,  
 “that I am pitied by you—by you,  
 “whose compassion I am so anxious  
 “to deserve, and to excite?”

“I am glad that you are safe,  
 “Sir,” said Mrs. Fermor, somewhat  
 disconcerted; “but I cannot help  
 “pitying the poor creature, who is



“ rendered so miserable by your leav-  
 “ ing her. Mrs. Loyd has told me,  
 “ that she never saw a more beautiful  
 “ girl, and that it was impossible for  
 “ a woman to be fonder of a man:  
 “ her agonies, she said, were affect-  
 “ ing beyond expression; that though  
 “ she could have killed her herself,  
 “ when she found she had so bad  
 “ a heart as to endeavour to mur-  
 “ der her excellent master, yet, she  
 “ could not refrain from feeling for  
 “ her when she took her last leave of  
 “ you.—In short, Sir Charles, you  
 “ have quite won the heart of Loyd,  
 “ as well as the affections of this un-  
 “ happy girl.”

“ Would to Heaven,” cried he  
 with a deep sigh, “ that I had won

“ the

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“the heart of the only woman in the  
“world who is entirely possessed of  
“mine ! All other hearts are indiffer-  
“ent to me.”

“You would not, then, accept of  
“the good Loyd’s,” replied she,  
smiling, to give a chearful turn to the  
conversation, “if she offered it to  
“you?”

“I am happy, madam,” said he,  
gravely, “if Mrs. Loyd likes her  
“situation, because you seem to inte-  
“rest yourself about her ; every crea-  
“ture to whom *you* are partial must  
“be of consequence to *me*.”

“Come, Sir Charles,” said Mrs.  
Fermor, “I will call for the tea, if  
“you please.”

She wished to talk on more indifferent subjects; though the present was really interesting to her, as well as to Sir Charles.—His gentle, amiable behaviour to that poor girl, (who evidently loved him to distraction) which had been displayed to her in the strongest colours by Mrs. Loyd; the actual danger he had been in from the fury of her passion, the visible preference which he gave to herself, the tenderness of his attentions to her, the softness of his manners, and the sighs which he could not, with all his efforts, restrain, touched her most sensibly: with the greatest care, however, she strove to conceal her sensations, but she, at the same time, felt the most forcible propensity to shew  
all

all the consideration, which his behaviour to her, more particularly respectful than ever, she thought demanded; and as his conduct had been uncommonly noble and affecting to Lucy, by whose folly he had been fluttered and discomposed.

Mrs. Fermor, therefore, from a principle of good-nature inherent in her, perhaps from another more tender motive, to which she was not willing to impute her behaviour, wished, by a lively and varied conversation, to divert his thoughts; but as the scene, in which he had been engaged, was rather of a melting kind, and as the sight of Mrs. Fermor always filled him with emotion, the charming sensibility which she had

F 3

discovered,



discovered, as her tears had diffused a new languor over her countenance, threw him into a voluptuous melancholy, which he desired not to remove; her endeavours, therefore, to enliven him were unsuccessful.

He sat down with his arms folded, and with his eyes fixed on her face, looking in so softened a manner, that she was embarrassed; but she also very much compassionated his situation; and finding that her most sprightly sallies had not the expected effect upon him, she strove, by a number of little assiduities and indulgencies, to rouse him from the dejection into which he had fallen.

He was, by no means, insensible to the flattering proofs of her esteem;

yet,

yet, while he enjoyed them in a way not to be expressed, he was fearful of seeming too much elated, lest he should be deprived of what he valued more than life, her conversation.

Besides, as his apparent want of spirits had gained him so much regard, he thought it would be very impolitic to throw off his dejected air in a hurry.

Mrs. Fermor, finding that all her endeavours to please, were received in a manner which convinced her that her power over him was absolute, and being, at that moment, very desirous to give him all the pleasure she could, without revolting against the principles which she had adopted on his first declaring his sentiments to

her, asked him, when the tea things were removed, if he would stay and partake of the present which she had received from him in the morning; the finest green peas she had ever seen, and which, so early in the season, were a rarity.

Transported at so desirable an invitation, still more so at the sweet smile with which it was accompanied, he expressed his acknowledgments in terms which discovered the high value which he fixed upon such a favour; and shewed, also, that he would have paid his thanks in a style more agreeable to the sensations she had raised in him, if he had not been checked by the fear of offending.

So

So much discretion on his side, was not lost upon her; to convince him that she was not unaffected by it, she tried to be still more obliging to him.

The weather was remarkably hot for the beginning of May; consequently the house was disagreeable.— Mrs. Fermor's garden was very small, but as it was full of flowers, which perfumed the air, it would of course be cooler and pleasanter than a close room: she asked him, therefore, if a few turns would not be refreshing.

He rose immediately, with a look of approbation, which made the effect of her complaisance extremely visible.

At the bottom of Mrs. Fermor's little garden, bounded by a quickset  
F 5 hedge,



hedge, over which a fine view of the country appeared, was a small green seat, shaded by a towering elm, round the stem of which, twined a beautiful honey-suckle in full flower. The lower part of the tree was hid by roses, and odoriferous shrubs; while, on the highest branches, a pretty nightingale tuned her melancholy love-tale.

As soon as the dusk of the evening approached, Sir Charles, and Mrs. Fermor, having sauntered up and down the grass-walk leading to the seat, chatting on a variety of subjects, which the latter introduced one after another, to hinder her companion from dwelling on any thing disagreeable to himself, or improper for her hearing, till the mournfully-musical  
songster

songster filled the air with harmony. She, who had the highest relish for those pensive pleasures, suddenly dropped the subject on which she was speaking, and asked Sir Charles how he could possibly be inattentive to such melodious strains.

“The sound of that voice,” said he, “which just now reproved me for want of taste, is of all sounds to my ear the sweetest—but as I wish to share all your pleasures, my dear Mrs. Fermor, let us sit down here, as I *must* listen to whatever gives *you* delight, with the highest satisfaction.”

“No compliments, Sir Charles,” said she, with a smile, “be silent and attentive.”

He obeyed; but while his eyes proved him to be a true convert to rural pleasures, they were, at the same time, fixed on her face with such an impassioned expression, that she became quite embarrassed.

He saw her embarrassment immediately, and respectfully threw his eyes on the ground; by so doing, he gave her an opportunity to recover herself.

She then renewed her former conversation, and with such additional spirit, that night came upon them before either of them thought about its approach; and had not her servant informed them that supper was ready, they might have, perhaps, sat there much longer.

Mrs.

Mrs. Fermor did the honours of her table with a grace and propriety which considerably increased Sir Charles's passion, who was too much engrossed by his attention to her, to receive any great entertainment from what was placed before him.—Enraptured, however, as he was, he would not take any advantage of her favours: he left her at an early hour, assuring her, with a sincerity not to be questioned, that he had never tasted real felicity till that evening.

An obliging smile was all her reply.

He went home in a situation not to be described: he closed not his eyes all night; if he happened to do so for a moment, from the fatigue which his  
spirits



spirits had endured, reflections on his past evening soon opened them.—He was afraid, indeed, to flatter himself, but he could not help believing, that she looked upon him with an aspect different from that which she wore on their first acquaintance.

He rose early, and the first motion he made was to send for Loyd, whom he esteemed more for having been recommended by Mrs. Fermor, than even for her fidelity and care in the management of his family affairs.

He chatted very freely with her over the adventure of the preceding day, and then, as if accidentally, mentioned Mrs. Fermor.

Loyd, who had known her from a child, was warm in her praise, and  
dropped

dropped several things relative to her disposition and character, which she had modestly omitted in her own account of herself to him, but which could not fail of raising her in the esteem of a man of sense.

Sir Charles could have almost hugged his good housekeeper for having spoken so favourably of her friend, and, putting five guineas into her hand, told her, they were a reward for her gratitude.

Loyd, astonished at such unexpected bounty, took an opportunity, when Sir Charles was busy in overlooking his workmen, to step to Mrs. Fermor: and, full of her master's generosity to her, said as much in *his* favour

favour as she had before said in her friend's.

“ I am glad,” replied Mrs. Fermor,  
 “ that you are so happy, and that you  
 “ make yourself so useful and agree-  
 “ able to Sir Charles.”

“ I owe all my happiness to you,  
 “ my dear madam,” said she, “ but to  
 “ be sure he is an excellent man; so  
 “ young, so good, as Mr. D’Anvers  
 “ and all the servants say. Who but  
 “ he could have sent away such a  
 “ sweet young creature who was dying  
 “ for love of him? But then, indeed,  
 “ though I would not lessen his  
 “ worth, we all know where his heart  
 “ is well enough.”

Mrs. Fermor was not, in the least,  
 prepared for the last speech of her  
 chatting

chatting friend.—It came upon her too suddenly; it alarmed her; she could not tell why, but she instantly turned pale, and then, with a faint, low voice, and a forced smile said, “And pray where is his heart, Mrs. Loyd?”

“La, madam, as if you did not know now,” replied she with the greatest simplicity. “Mr. D’Anvers heard Sir Charles tell Mr. Brudenel, that life was not worth having without you.”

The face and neck of Mrs. Fermor were deeply crimsoned by Mrs. Loyd’s concluding words, but she turned from her, pretending to look for something in her work bag, and soon afterwards changed the conversation.

As



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As soon as Loyd was gone, she began to reflect more seriously than ever upon a subject which was, she found, no secret to any body; and, as she still resolved not to marry, some scruples arose in her mind concerning the propriety of receiving frequent visits from Sir Charles. “ Yet, why  
“ should I deprive myself of a pleasure so innocent in itself, because  
“ people take notice of it? He always  
“ behaved perfectly respectful to me,  
“ and he is the most sensible, amiable  
“ young fellow in the world. Must I  
“ deprive myself and him of the  
“ satisfaction we enjoy by conversing  
“ with each other, because people  
“ are impertinent enough to talk  
“ about us?”

Mrs.

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Mrs. Fermor was not in her heart displeased, though she did not allow herself to reckon much upon it, at Sir Charles's speech to his friend, communicated by Mrs. Loyd. She was not sorry to be esteemed, nor even to be loved by him, if he kept his passion within bounds; but she really never imagined that he was really so much attached to her, as to be in the least unhappy at her refusing him: she thought only that he would have deviated entirely from the character of a lover, if he had not affected to look wretched, and pretended to be miserable, when he found that his offers were not accepted of, without once supposing that he actually had one uneasy moment about her.

With

With regard to the rattle of the world, she had always been of opinion, while she acted agreeably to the dictates of her own conscience, she had no reason to mind what was said or surmized concerning her.—Governed, therefore, by those reflections, she determined to make no alteration in her conduct towards Sir Charles; for, supposing that he really loved her as much as he himself declared, and as his people believed, the prohibition of his visits would be a piece of ill nature, of which she could not bring herself to be guilty.

THE END OF THE FIFTH BOOK.

BOOK

BOOK VI.

**W**HILE love thus pleaded strongly for Sir Charles in Mrs. Fermor's bosom, he, encouraged by her obliging attentions, spent every moment of his time that he could spare from his domestic affairs with her; and, in the many hours they were together, disclosed every secret of his heart, by asking her opinion and advice about the regulation of his family and estate. He consulted her also concerning objects proper for his benevolence among his tenants and neighbours, and



and the best method of making his bounty serviceable to them.

Mrs. Fermor, in return, delivered her thoughts with an honest freedom, and a sincerity which plainly discovered how much she wished to see every thing, in which he was engaged, tend to the promotion of his pleasure, and the advancement of his interest; and she had the satisfaction not only to see them approved of, but to find that his estate was greatly improved, and his character raised by her admonitions.

Gratitude was now added to love and esteem; and, as he every day confessed the advantages which he every day derived from her conversation and judgment, he longed to make  
some

some equivalent for the benefits which he received from her.

She always stopped him in the midst of his acknowledgments, and always declared, that, as she wanted nothing, nothing would she ever receive.

No persuasions could ever make her come to the manor; nor could all his eloquence prevail on her to air with him in his chariot. She even rallied him for using it so often, and told him, that to be always lolling in it, made him, she thought, look indolent and effeminate.

He subscribed to the justness of her reproof, and answered, that if she would but favour him with her company in a walk now and then, he would willingly consent never to  
occupy ]

occupy his carriage again; but when necessity sufficiently apologized for such an indulgence.

She laughed and told him, that she should out-walk him; but that he might, however, try, as she believed he would soon be heartily tired of an exercise to which he was so little accustomed, and to which she had been used for so long a time, when the weather was fine.

After they had drank their tea, they went upon an evening ramble about the pleasantest parts of the country.

When they came to any stiles, which sometimes checked their progress, she proposed to return homewards: but he laughed at her prudery

so much, as he called it, that she told him, if he would go on, she should get over them herself without any difficulty, being accustomed to such interruptions.

"You may do so, when I am not  
"with you," said he; "but you,  
"certainly, cannot refuse me your  
"hand upon such an occasion, except  
"you chuse to discover a particular  
"dislike to my offer."

"What idle fancies!" cried she,  
giving him her hand with a rosy smile,  
"men are never satisfied."

"Men in love never can be,"  
replied he, pressing it ardently; "and  
"I have often wondered, that, with  
"the uncommon knowledge you are  
"possessed of, Mrs. Fermor, you  
VOL. II. G "should



" should have so long remained ignorant of the force of a passion which bears down all before it: " great, too," continued he, " is my surprize, that, with all that charming sensibility in your countenance, " you have never tasted the transporting sweets of mutual love."

So home an observation made her face glow like scarlet; but presently recovering herself, and looking very gravely, " I would wish always," said she, " to remain ignorant of a passion, which occasions, I have much reason to believe, far more pain than pleasure."

" To you," replied he, " it can never occasion pain, because you are

“are certain of being beloved still  
“more than you love.”

“I am not sure of the truth of that  
“assertion,” said she, “and will  
“therefore hear no more of it.”

Whenever she was thus peremptory, Sir Charles was immediately silent; but as her anger arising from his entering upon a subject so apparently disagreeable to her, did not continue long, she soon began to talk to him upon some other topic.

While they were sitting together, one afternoon, upon the green seat in her garden, she at work, and he reading to her, as he frequently did, his servant brought him a letter from lady Ruffel, and told him, that her man waited for an answer.

Sir Charles, after having directed a glance to Mrs. Fermor for her approbation, opened it, and read it to her directly.

TO SIR CHARLES LEUSUM, Bart.

I HAVE taken up my pen, my dear Leusum, upon the most interesting and delicate subject in which it ever was employed; and I have only to wish, that my expressions may be adequate to my feelings upon this occasion.

You cannot be ignorant that lord G—— has been dead above three months, after having lived scarce one with his wife, who never was capable of feeling for him that affection which he, perhaps, thought he deserved;

ed; and so strongly prejudiced was she in your favour, that she never ceased to lament the disagreeable necessity under which her filial duty, she firmly believed, laid her, of giving up the man whom she sincerely loved, and of taking him whom her parents preferred on account of his superior rank.

Ever since a marriage, so disgusting to her, I have been (as I long before was) entrusted with the inmost secrets of her heart, an heart which was always strongly attached to you; an heart which has ever been fully sensible of your extraordinary merit.

The strict intimacy between this amiable woman and myself, (for amiable she is in a superlative degree)



made me thoroughly satisfied, that nothing but a proper delicacy prevented her, the moment she was at liberty, from declaring to me, that her sentiments concerning you were not in the least altered; nay, indeed, that her esteem for you was rather increased, if it could be increased, by your so handsomely acceding to the determination of her parents, and in not endeavouring to persuade her to listen to you; by doing which you might have tempted her to an act of disobedience for which she might never have forgiven herself, and contributed to keep a passion alive that must have produced an addition to her wretchedness.

For a week or two I forbore, through decency, to mention you, but

but have since thought it idle to wait any longer for an avowal of sentiments, which nothing, I saw, but the fear of being too forward, hindered her from disclosing.—I, therefore, took an opportunity to tell her, that you could not, I was sure, if you loved her before, love her less for having been such a martyr to filial obedience; and that, as she was now quite free and independent, with an increased fortune to offer to you, unencumbered, I would let you know that she would no longer refuse to receive a visit from you.

She blushed her consent in a manner that would have charmed you beyond expression, and has since declared, that nobody can tell the violence

she did to her inclination in leaving you for lord G——, and that she never can expect any happiness unless you share it with her.

Reflect upon these words, Sir Charles, with all the tenderness due to the charming young creature who spoke them, and who, by her implicit submission to those possessed of a right to dispose of her, while she retained so strong a partiality for you, discovered a disposition so entirely calculated to make you happy in the marriage state: reflect upon these words, and you must be absolutely blind to your own happiness, as well as guilty of the greatest cruelty to the most amiable woman.

woman in the world, if you do not immediately come to your

Ever-affectionate

J RUSSEL.

Mrs. Fermor's countenance underwent various changes while Sir Charles read his aunt's letter, the contents of which engrossed his attention so much, that those changes were unobserved by him: not supposing, indeed, that the contents could any way affect her, he had no idea of her being agitated by them, but when he had finished the letter, cried, "So, I shall determine this  
" affair in a moment—Could you, my  
" dear Mrs. Fermor, indulge me with  
" pen, ink and paper—as I will return



“no answer but what has your full  
“approbation.”

“May I not, then,” said she, recollecting herself, “ask you what you intend to write?”

“An absolute denial, undoubtedly,” said he, “Admitting I was not  
“certain, that I can never be happy  
“with any other woman than yourself,  
“do you imagine I can think of a woman who left me for a title?”

“But when you are sensible that  
“it was merely out of obedience to  
“her—”

“I shall not pretend, madam,” interrupted he, eagerly, “to dispute  
“the point with you—I am but too  
“well assured that you are always in  
“the right. Lady G— may be unhappy,  
“happy,

“happy, but I should be much more  
 “so by marrying her, when my whole  
 “soul is devoted to one whom I must  
 “ever love, though she is still unsus-  
 “ceptible of tender impressions in my  
 “favour.”

A pleasing sensation, for which she,  
 however, almost hated herself, instant-  
 ly arose in the bosom of Mrs. Fermor :  
 yet she still argued warmly in behalf  
 of lady G—.

“Upon every other subject,” said  
 Sir Charles, “Mrs. Fermor convinces  
 “me, in a moment, of the superiority  
 “of her judgment; but where all my  
 “happiness is at stake, I must beg  
 “leave to differ from her.”

He, accordingly, went with her  
 into the house, and wrote an answer

to lady Ruffel's letter : he thanked her for the esteem which she had shewn for him, but assured her that his affections had been long engaged, and that he could, therefore, by no means, comply with her ladyship's wishes.

He presented his laconic epistle to Mrs. Fermor; who shook her head at him, and it was soon afterwards dispatched to London.

Sir Charles, then, returned to his delightful employment of contributing, by every art in his power, to the pleasure of Mrs. Fermor; who, as soon as she was alone, and had leisure to reflect seriously on what had passed during the different proceedings of the day, began really to think that Sir Charles's regard for her was stronger than

than she had ever supposed it to be;  
 and, about the same time, she found  
 that he was equally dear to her.  
 "For that very reason," said she, "I  
 " will not marry him: he has taken a  
 " strange fancy to me, just now, in  
 " spite of the difference of years be-  
 " tween us, and unsuitableness of  
 " manners; but when his eyes are  
 " opened (opened they, doubtless,  
 " will soon be) how severely will he  
 " repent of having married a woman  
 " so much older than himself, whose  
 " advancing years, during their union,  
 " will only tend to render her less  
 " and less agreeable?—He certainly  
 " does not know what he is about—  
 " I will, therefore, I must, from pure  
 " esteem and affection for him, oppose  
 " his



“his present inclination. I will always be his friend, but never his wife.”

With that well-meant determination she composed herself to rest.

Sir Charles was, at the same time, kept wakeful by vexation; cruelly disquieted because he could not move the unrivalled mistress of his heart to compleat his felicity. However, as she was more than ever obliging, he made no alteration in his behaviour to her.

One Sunday evening he told her, that he had called on her in the morning, and had not found her at home.

“You will never find me at home,” said she, “on that day,  
“at

“at that hour: I was in a place in  
“which you, I am afraid, never appear—I was at church.”

Sir Charles, in some confusion at so pointed and so proper a rebuke, replied, that he would always, for the future, be at the same place on a Sunday, as he should be happy in following her example in every thing.

“I am not of consequence enough,” said she, “to do any good in that way  
“to others: but you, Sir Charles,  
“have it in your power to do a great  
“deal—How natural is it for your domestics and dependents to say, My  
“master, or my landlord, is a good-natured, generous man, yet he never  
“goes to church: why then need we?  
“Whereas, on the other hand, were  
“you

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“ you constant in your attendance  
“ there, they would suppose that you  
“ could not be a good man without such  
“ a conduct.—I shall not enter into a  
“ long detail of the necessary duties of  
“ religion; your own good sense, on  
“ a very little recollection, will, I dare  
“ believe, convince you of the necessity  
“ of setting a laudable example to  
“ people over whom, by your rank and  
“ fortune, you have so much influence.  
“ It is not to be told how forcibly  
“ example operates upon all degrees  
“ of people, especially upon our  
“ inferiors. Possibly, you will tell me,  
“ that, were those who absent themselves  
“ to go every Sunday to church,  
“ they would not be at all the better  
“ in their lives; and there is certainly  
“ a great

“ a great probability, that many of  
 “ them might not be so; but still  
 “ there is a chance for their hearing  
 “ something which may make an im-  
 “ pression upon them—the most pro-  
 “ fligate have, sometimes, been bene-  
 “ fitted by a practical discourse proper-  
 “ ly delivered—They would, at least,  
 “ by attending divine service, be pre-  
 “ vented from idling away their time,  
 “ and spending their money foolishly,  
 “ if not viciously; and if but a single  
 “ man was rendered a more worthy  
 “ being by following Sir Charles  
 “ Leusum’s example, would not the  
 “ reflection arising at the sight of such  
 “ a man give an exquisite satisfaction  
 “ to him, who, I am well assured, feels  
 “ a noble pleasure in promoting the  
 “ happiness



“happiness of his fellow creatures?”

“Besides, there is not, in my opinion,

“a more agreeable appearance than

“a clean, though homely congrega-

“tion, all joining in praises to their

“Maker for the blessings he has be-

“stowed upon them, in giving them

“a generous and benevolent patron,

“who feels their wants, and liberally

“relieves them: praying devoutly, at

“the same time, that you may be

“richly rewarded by that power from

“whom you derive your abilities

“to make their lives comfortable.”

“In how amiable, how captivating

“a light,” said Sir Charles, “have

“you displayed a part of my duty, of

“which I will freely confess (as I ne-

“ver have deceived, as I never will

“deceive

“deceive you, Mrs. Fermor) I had a  
 “very slight idea before!—What a  
 “charming mind is yours, which can  
 “draw pleasure and improvement  
 “from every thing! and how much  
 “am I indebted to you for turning my  
 “thoughts upon such important sub-  
 “jects!”

“Come,” said she, smiling, “no  
 “more speeches, Sir Charles. If I  
 “have, ever since we became acquaint-  
 “ed, said or done *one* thing which  
 “can afford you real satisfaction, or  
 “tend to make you spend *one* hour of  
 “your life happier than you did be-  
 “fore, I shall think myself over-  
 “paid.”

The entrance of one of her maids  
 prevented Sir Charles from answering  
 her

her in the manner he intended, in the fulness of his heart. But a *look* convinced her how deeply he felt the striking truths which had flowed from her lips,

When they were again by themselves, he would have renewed his encomiums on her, pretty much in the same style as that in which his former effusions were delivered, but she absolutely put a stop to them, and drew him, insensibly, into so pleasing a conversation on different topics, that the moments flew away with incredible velocity :—With such velocity, that, when the clock struck NINE, he found himself more loth to leave her than ever.

Upon

Upon his expressing the greatest reluctance at parting, she called him back, and told him, with a smile, she would give him another hour.

With the sincerest joy, bordering upon rapture, he retook possession of his chair.

As they were chatting together, painting was accidentally mentioned; and she, as accidentally, said, that she thought few miniatures strong likenesses.—“I have a little picture,” continued she, “which was drawn for me  
“at Mr. Fermor’s desire, but certainly  
“ly the resemblance is extremely  
“faint, though it was executed by a  
“capital hand.” Sir Charles intreated her to let him see it.

She



She went up stairs immediately.

When she returned with the picture, she told him, that, if it had ever been like her, it was not so at that time, as she was totally altered since she fate for it.

He did not contradict her assertion; but having looked very earnestly both at the original and the copy, returned the latter.

She carelessly laid it down upon a little table under the glass, which was covered with books, and, when she went up to her chamber after Sir Charles's departure, forgot to take it with her.

When Sir Charles came the next day, in the afternoon, she was above stairs.

The

The first object which struck him was the miniature, (it had remained on the table) partly covered by a book: he had, the evening before, been strongly tempted to ask her for it, and nothing but the certainty of being refused had prevented him. He was now as strongly tempted to steal it, at least for a time, till he could get it copied; for though she had really thought it too young and handsome, she had not said so, because she would not draw a compliment upon her person; it was only a very agreeable likeness of her.

After a momentary debate with himself, how far it might be wrong to take it, an excessive desire of being possessed of it conquered his scruples,

he

he clapped it into his bosom just before she entered the room.

From the time she shewed it, she thought no more about it: had she, that day, recollected where she had laid it, it would have immediately slipped her memory, as a second letter was brought to him, while he was at her house, from lady Ruffel.

After having gently chid him for the coolness of his reply to her last, her ladyship thus proceeded:

“ On breaking your refusal, as mildly as I could, to lady G——, it had, however, so powerful an effect upon her, that she swooned away, and fell from one fit into another during several hours; and when she was, with difficulty, brought to herself, lamented

“ mented her unhappy fate, and  
 “ spoke of you in such terms of  
 “ esteem and admiration as would  
 “ have melted the most obdurate  
 “ heart : I, therefore, again offered to  
 “ write, and to describe her suffer-  
 “ ings, but she intreated me to for-  
 “ bear, as she had too sincere a re-  
 “ gard for you, to wish to oblige you  
 “ to render yourself miserable on her  
 “ account.—So much real tendernefs,  
 “ Sir Charles, certainly deserves the  
 “ most ardent return, especially, as  
 “ the consequences of your refusal  
 “ have thrown her into a nervous  
 “ fever, which will, most probably,  
 “ unless you can prevail on yourself to  
 “ see her, and administer consolation



"to her, end in a general de-  
 cay. So much unmerited distress  
 which this young creature en-  
 dures, should, I think, be re-  
 moved by you, as you have been  
 the cause of it. You are not na-  
 turally cruel, but you will appear  
 entirely divested of sensibility, if  
 you can, after having read the above  
 description of lady G—'s misery,  
 feel no wish to contribute to the  
 removal of it."

He read his aunt's second letter  
 aloud to Mrs. Fermor, who burst into  
 tears at the conclusion of it.

Sir Charles, surprised and alarmed,  
 threw down the letter on the table;  
 and, sitting by her, took her hand in  
 his,

his, begging her, in the most affectionate terms, and with the most concerned countenance, to tell him the cause of her affliction.

“Can you, possibly, ask me?” said she rising, and turning from him.

“Is not the woman who loves Sir

“Charles Leusum without being loved

“in return; an object of the greatest

“compassion?”

As soon as these words had escaped her, she was sensible of the impropriety of them—a glowing crimson covered her face.

Sir Charles, hastily catching at them, said, “How, Mrs. Fernor, are those  
“your real sentiments? For H—n’s

H 2

“fake

“I can repeat them—my very being depends upon them.”

“Hold, Sir,” replied she, recovering herself, “is this your way of pitying lady G—?”

She then entered so warmly into a conversation in behalf of that unfortunate lady, and painted the cruelty of neglecting her in such strong colours, that Sir Charles, if he could have been affected with any thing but that wherein she was interested, must have been moved—but the manner in which she pleaded in lady G—’s favour, only rendered her a thousand times more dear to him.

He plainly told her, that, whatever might be the consequence, he  
could

could love no woman except herself; that his passion, strengthened by reason and reflection, had arisen to such a height as to make him utterly unable to live without conversing with her; that the bare idea of her being uneasy, as she evidently appeared to be, was sufficient to distract him; that her tears had pierced his heart, and that she had alarmed him in such a manner, that he did not know when he should recover the tranquillity of his mind.—“Judge, then,” continued he, “judge then, my dear Mrs. Fermor, if I can support the most distant thought of marrying Lady G—.” “You may, indeed, be assured, from the patience and submission with



“ which I bear your repeated refusals,  
 “ of the excess of my love; which  
 “ would not be thus confined, did I  
 “ not live in perpetual dread of your  
 “ displeasure.”

She looked down, but made no answer.

He seized that moment once more to plead, with the most insinuating elocution, for her consent—he was sitting by her side; but he immediately altered his attitude, and dropped on his knees before her.

He, then, with all the supplemental eloquence of looks and sighs, intreated her to listen to him. “ You  
 “ have, more than once,” said he,  
 “ kindly confessed that you do not  
 “ hate

" hate me, Mrs. Fermor, and I have  
 " some reason to believe, from the con-  
 " sideration with which you have lately  
 " behaved to me, that you did not de-  
 " ceive me : may I not, therefore, ra-  
 " tionally hope that, could you prevail  
 " on yourself to become my wife, time,  
 " and my increasing endeavours to  
 " gain your heart, will, at length, soften  
 " it in my favour ? May I not, at least,  
 " hope that you would not be quite  
 " unhappy with me ?"

Here a deep sigh issued from his  
 tortured bosom : he was overpowered  
 by the different sensations which se-  
 verely distressed him, and his head  
 sunk upon her hand, which he had,  
 till then, almost forcibly detained in  
 his.

Mrs. Fermor, touched to the soul, was unable any longer to sustain a scene which shook her firmest resolves. Tears rushed from her eyes—she raised him from the ground, and said, “This is too much, Sir Charles ; —your reliance on my esteem and “friendship for you, carry you too “far.”

“And is it possible for you,” replied he mournfully, “to profess “friendship and esteem for a man, “whom you can thus see wretched, “without feeling a desire to relieve “him, while the concern which beams “from those dear eyes convinces me “that I am sincerely pitied by “you?”

“I do

“ I do pity you,” said she, “ and it  
 “ is from friendship and esteem alone,  
 “ whatever inconsistency may appear  
 “ in this declaration, that I refuse to  
 “ comply with your wishes.—I dare  
 “ believe, Sir Charles,” continued she,  
 “ that you love me at present, tender-  
 “ ly and truly; for that very reason I  
 “ persist in keeping my resolution.  
 “ You are young, and violently eager  
 “ in the pursuit of what will, you  
 “ really imagine, for ever fix your  
 “ felicity.—The mere novelty of the  
 “ affair may, perhaps, for a month or  
 “ two, keep you in the same humour:  
 “ but when your expectations are all  
 “ gratified; when you begin coolly  
 “ to reflect upon the folly which



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“ you have committed, in marrying  
“ a woman five or six years older  
“ than yourself, a woman who has  
“ neither person, family, nor fortune  
“ to recommend her, and who has but  
“ just seen enough of the world to  
“ dislike it, possibly, to despise it,  
“ how keen will be your repentance  
“ for having so rashly placed yourself  
“ in a situation from which you can-  
“ not with honour be extricated, and  
“ to obliterate the remembrance of  
“ which you will be obliged to plunge  
“ into a thousand follies, not to say  
“ vices? From the most disinterested  
“ friendship for you, therefore, Sir  
“ Charles, I have hitherto opposed  
“ your desires, and, impelled by the  
“ same

“ same friendship, I still am resolved  
 “ to reject all your offers.”

“ But, my dear Mrs. Fermor,” interrupted he impatiently, “ hear me  
 “ a moment longer—Can you, reflecting upon the sentiments which you  
 “ know I feel for you, believe me capable of ever departing from them;  
 “ of forgetting the tenderness, respect and gratitude to which you are  
 “ justly entitled from me? Can you really think me of so volatile a disposition as to cease loving the person whom I at present sincerely  
 “ adore, or that if I *should* change, I could be capable of making so base  
 “ a return to your condescension in my favour?”

" I do not believe you capable of  
 " using me ill, Sir Charles ; I am too  
 " well acquainted with your noble-  
 " ness of mind, and generous dispo-  
 " sition ; but there is a wide difference  
 " between tenderness and good man-  
 " ners : when I have experienced the  
 " *first*, I shall not be, probably, con-  
 " tented with the *last* only. However,  
 " this, as I said before, is not my  
 " chief reason. In so earnestly en-  
 " deavouring to persuade me to be-  
 " come your wife, you are seeking  
 " to hurry yourself into a state which  
 " will certainly produce penitential  
 " sensations in you. Let my friend-  
 " ship, therefore, save you from the  
 " bitter reproaches of remorse ; and,  
 " if you would not forfeit my  
 " esteem

"esteem for ever, and be forbidden  
 "to see me again, say no more on a  
 "subject, on which I will not, posi-  
 "tively, hear another syllable."

As the latter part of Mrs. Fermor's speech was delivered in a more determined tone than usual, (she had never spoken to him in so peremptory a manner) he was absolutely intimidated by it. The total exclusion from her company was a blow which he had long dreaded: he was silenced, and so shocked at her still persisting in her first resolution, and even after he flattered himself that he perceived signs of indulgence in her, that he could not remain in his chair.

He



He rose, and went directly into the garden, in which, after having walked up and down for a few moments in the greatest agitation, he threw himself upon the seat, (already mentioned) and abandoned himself to despair.

Glad was Mrs. Fermor, at first, that he retired from her, for she had never been so much shaken. Once, she was actually on the point of yielding, but the growing affection which she felt for him checked her; and as she was convinced that passion had entirely banished reason from *his* mind, she, after a struggle, a sharp struggle with *her own*, conquered, at last, a very powerful inclination to consent to his wishes—but the victory which she had gained

gained was of a short continuance : love, under the form of compassion, soon urged her to do every thing in her power to give ease to an heart which was, she saw, deeply afflicted by her refusal.

She, therefore, went immediately in search of him.

She found him sitting in a dejected attitude, leaning on one of the elbows of the seat. His face was covered with his hand, while numberless sighs issued from his overcharged bosom.

She sat down by him, and with a look in which tenderness and concern were blended, asked him how he did, and if he would not go in with her, and think about answering lady Russell's letter.

He

He looked up; waked from his reverie by the silver tone of her sweet voice—his eyes were inflamed; and he seemed to be robbed of the powers of speech.

He followed her silently to the house, where she very officiously placed in his view the writing things, and then took up her work, to which she applied herself with unusual alertness.

After having made several attempts to write, he threw down the pen.

“I am altogether unfit for any thing,” said he, “at present: I will endeavour to write to-morrow, and bring my letter with me, that you may see it before I send it away.”

A chearing smile was her answer.

For

For a quarter of an hour neither of them uttered a syllable—Sir Charles, indeed, was too much oppressed to talk, and Mrs. Fermor was thinking on what she should say to relieve the disquietude under which he laboured.

After the utterance of a few sentences, by which she endeavoured to open a conversation, but which were, she found, ineffectual, she sat down to her musick, hoping that a lively air would rouse her lover.

He was rooted to his chair, and gazed on her, with folded arms, till he was almost incapable of discerning any thing.

As she really was not sensible that he loved her to so great a degree as he did, tho' she saw him still dispirited,

she



she very rationally imagined that a diversion of his ideas might be serviceable to him, and therefore asked him to finish the book which he began to read to her the day before.

Willing to please, though quite unable to please by so doing, at that moment, he strove to oblige her, but a tremor seizing his whole frame, his voice faltered, and he laid aside the volume—"I cannot go on," said he—"pray excuse me at present."

Having uttered the last word, he turned his face from her.—She sighed, on observing so much uneasiness at what would, she thought, soon be forgotten, and then tried to engage him in any idle chat which first occurred, but his inconsistent answers discovered  
such

such inward perturbation, that she was really very much hurt by them.

When the hour of parting drew near, she good-naturedly told him, that he might either go or partake of her supper, as he found himself inclined.

“I shall always be inclined,” said he, with a melancholy accent, “to see you till the last moment of my life : “ I know you, I think, too well, Mrs. Fermor, to believe that you will “ refuse me the only comfort that is “ left for me.”

He accordingly sat down with her to supper, but touched not a morsel of any thing.

At his departure from her he wrung her hand.

She

She was alarmed, and pressed *his* in return, in order to enliven him a little.

He seemed to take the pressure as it was designed, and, lifting *hers* to his lips, bade her adieu.

He passed the night without once closing his eyes. He was now certain that she had resolved never to make him happy.

Mrs. Fermor, in the mean while, was not in a more easy situation: thoroughly grieved at being under a necessity of having recourse to such violent measures, she consoled herself with thinking that the passions, at his time of life though very strong, were not lasting, and that when he had  
entirely

entirely got over his disappointment, all would be right.

Mrs. Fermor, in truth, not having been accustomed to the company of any other men, while her husband lived, but those of the most sensual turn, (though by their wit, humour, and knowledge of the world, extremely entertaining in conversation) always heard them declare loudly their sentiments in favour of the young and handsome among her own sex, and had, consequently, no idea that a man in the bloom of youth, and lovely in his person beyond expression, so adored by the women, could long lament the opposition which she had made to the gratification of a passion that would soon, she imagined, be extinguished.—



extinguished.—But she was mistaken in her conjectures; Sir Charles, notwithstanding the warmth of his feelings as a lover, had a delicacy in his way of thinking, not very commonly met with in young men, especially young men of his rank and fortune; few men, indeed, spent more time in reflection.—By reflection he had frequently experienced the futility of all enjoyments merely personal; unless the heart had a principal share in them; and as no woman ever had made an impression upon his heart but Mrs. Fermor, he naturally sighed and languished to make her's vibrate in unison with his own. Fondly, however, as he doated on her, he could not be happy till she became as well  
pleased

pleased with him: and with the hopes of being so happy he flattered himself, relying upon his continued affidavies and persevering attentions, till her last peremptory rejection drove him to fear that he should never inspire her breast with tenderness and love.

After having tossed through a restless night, Sir Charles received a letter from Brudenel, with whom he had constantly corresponded, which informed him that Lucy had been ill of a malignant fever, light-headed, and in imminent danger; that she was then recovered from her fever, but was thought, by the physicians, to be in a decline; that her whole soul was engrossed by him, of whom she continually spoke in the highest terms; that

he

he had paid her two hundred pounds agreeable to his orders, and had agreed with a tenant of his in Yorkshire to board her; whither she was to go, as soon as her distracted condition of body and mind would give her leave.

Sir Charles's innate humanity made him sigh for a sorrow so nearly resembling his own.

After having written a few lines to lady Russel, to convince her how impossible it was for him to comply with her request, he returned to Mrs. Fermor.

The appearance of him, pale, melancholy, and disordered all over, affected her prodigiously; and she left nothing unsaid, nothing undone, to restore his cheerfulness.

The

The letter relating to poor Lucy touched her: and his answer to lady Russel left her no room to suppose that his determination with regard to lady G— would be recalled—She did not chuse, therefore, to renew a subject which would, she judiciously imagined, only make an addition to his disquiet.

He went home to dinner: he returned in the afternoon, but not at all better; complaining, when he was questioned about his health, of a raging head-ach.

Mrs. Fermor was more afflicted at his complaint than he expected to see her.—She advised him to go home, and endeavour to sleep it off.



“Do not, Oh! do not send me  
“from you,” said he—

There he stopped: he could not  
proceed.

She brought him Lavender-water,  
and *Eau-de-Luce*, in order to admini-  
ster relief to him.

He thanked her, but he was not re-  
lieved.

Finding, at last, that he rather  
seemed to be worse, she put her hand  
on his forehead to feel if it was hot.

He caught it eagerly, and, pressing  
it to his lips, kissed it with fervour;  
then, letting it go, cried, “Forgive  
“me, Mrs. Fermor, I will not offend  
“you again: but—upon my soul—I  
“am—half distracted.”

After a moment’s hesitation, he  
looked

looked up to her with more serenity in his countenance, acknowledged that he had been wrong, and promised to use his utmost endeavours to correct his passions for the future, and to hinder them from being rebellious.

Accordingly, he began to converse with more composure, but there was still a dejection in his carriage, and a melancholy in his features, which plainly shewed the uneasiness of his mind.

Mrs. Fermor availed herself of every art she was mistress of to amuse his thoughts, and to prevent them from dwelling too long on one subject.

For two days he remained pretty much in the same state—On the even-

ing of the *second*, as he spoke but little, she earnestly asked him how he did.

He replied, that his head-ach was returned with a violence hardly supportable.

She discovered an unfeigned concern at his complaints, and really felt so much anxiety, that she was almost ready to promise him every thing, but did not think the time present was proper for such a behaviour to him.

He left her at nine o'clock, very ill: and she passed the night without rest.

On her sending, the next morning, to know how he found himself, the answer was that he lay in a violent fever.

His

His mind, indeed, had endured so much misery, that his body, (agreeably to the operations of nature) was severely affected by it.

Mrs. Fermor was alarmed and terrified, and sent punctually, twice a day, to enquire after him.

In the afternoon of the seventh day, after having received a very bad account of him when she sent an enquiry at noon, his chariot stopped at the door, from which descended Mrs. Loyd, drowned in tears. The poor woman was, indeed, so concerned for her master, that it was some time before she could make herself intelligible; at last, she made Mrs. Fermor, who was not less grieved, understand that the physicians thought Sir Charles in dan-



ger, and that he had commanded her to take the chariot, and to endeavour to prevail on Mrs. Fermor to come and see him before he died.

Mrs. Fermor shuddered at so melancholy a message, and immediately prepared to accompany Mrs. Loyd, of whom she asked numberless questions relative to his illness, and to the remedies which had been prescribed to him.

“Alas, madam,” said the good woman, with great simplicity, “it is in your power alone to save him, nothing else will signify.”

A deep sigh was all Mrs. Fermor’s reply.

She soon appeared in his chamber. Upon her entrance he put back the curtain,

curtain, and holding out his hand, said with a faint voice, "You are come, then, my dear Mrs. Fermor; I am once more permitted to have the happiness of seeing you: I will confess, it was my last, my earnest wish, and I thank you for this proof of the friendship you have honoured me with.—I have been very much indisposed: I am still so; and they have very prudently told me that it is more than probable I may not recover—I am obliged to my physicians for such timely notice, and have, being perfectly in my senses, endeavoured to prepare myself for my last moments.—In this packet," continued he, presenting it to her sealed up, "is my will: as I love and

“esteem no person so truly as yourself,  
 “I have left you all my fortune, a  
 “few legacies excepted, because I  
 “am well assured that you will make  
 “a laudable use of it: I have also ven-  
 “tured to add my picture, flattering  
 “myself that you will not be sorry  
 “to look sometimes on the resem-  
 “blance of a man who loved you too  
 “ardently to enjoy life without you—  
 “All I have now to ask—is—that you  
 “will pardon every thing I have ever  
 “inadvertently said or done to offend  
 “you—and that—you will close my  
 “eyes—and receive my last sigh.”

He ceased to speak—and, impati-  
 ent for her answer, moved the curtain  
 a little farther back; he moved it, and  
 saw her motionless in her chair.

Shocked

Shocked and alarmed beyond expression, weak as he was, he called for help, and rang the bell with violence, as the nurse, Mrs. Loyd, and Mr. D'Anvers, had all left the room, out of respect, as soon as Mrs. Fermor entered it.

They immediately obeyed the summons, and employed every remedy proper in such cases to restore her to life, while Sir Charles watched her recovery with an anxiety not to be described.

As soon as her senses returned, she, with a flood of tears, endeavoured to apologize for having alarmed him: imputing the shock which she had given to his spirits, to her surprize and concern, but could scarce make herself understood.



Sir Charles, extremely uneasy at having thrown her into such an agitation, lest it should prejudice her health, stretched out his hand again to take hold of her's, and begged her to be composed; assuring her, that her readiness to come to see him had relieved him, and that, if she recieved no harm from the kind exertion of her good-nature, he should be as happy as he was obliged to her.

She made no direct answer: her tears would not permit her; but she did not withdraw her hand which he held close to his bosom.

As she sat very near him, she found that his spirits were much fluttered: she therefore plainly saw the necessity of concealing her own emotions with  
the

the utmost address, that his might not be encreased.

Drying her eyes as well as she could, she intreated him, by all the friendship which he had ever professed for her, to make himself perfectly easy about every thing relating to her.—“I will not leave you—but then you must keep yourself as quiet as possible—Time, the prescription of your physicians, and my attentions, will, I hope, restore you to my prayers.”

With great difficulty she uttered the last words: her tears began to flow again apace—Sir Charles pressed her hand eagerly to his lips.—She intreated him not to talk.

Charmed with the concern which she discovered for him, he thanked

her, with a look full of the most expressive tenderness, and she asked Mrs. Loyd and the nurse if there were no medicines ready for him to take, as she perceived that he was very much fatigued.

The former brought her a draught—After having asked him if he would take it, she herself raised him in his bed, while Mrs. Loyd poured it out.

Sir Charles, affected deeply by her assiduity about him, as well as weakened by his disorder, as soon as he lifted his head from the pillow, was just on the point of fainting: it dropped upon her bosom. She had put her arm round him in order to support him; and on seeing him in that condition, pressed him closer to her, with a sigh.

Sir

Sir Charles, transported at so much unexpected kindness, lifted up his fine eyes, full of langour, and cried, " Oh! G—d!—death, in this blessed " situation, is a thousand times more " eligible than life in any other."

A Blush, which those few rapturous expressions occasioned, covered the face and neck of Mrs. Fermor: she still, however, held him tenderly in her arms till he had taken his medicine; then, placing his pillow in the easiest position, she earnestly intreated him to try to compose himself to rest.

He told her that he would endeavour to obey her, called her his dear, his kindest friend, and again begged to have her hand, which was not detained from him: but those repeated indulgencies



Indulgencies stirred up such tumultuous sensations of joy in his beating breast, that sleep fled from his eyelids.

When the physician arrived he pronounced him to be in the greatest perturbation: but declared that the fever was, in his opinion, abated, and told Mrs. Fermor, who attended him to the door in order to sift his real sentiments, that, with unremitting care, he might, he thought, recover.

When she returned to the patient's bed-side, he, with a smile which strongly described the pleasure her assiduity gave him, said, "Now, I know, my dear Mrs. Fermor, that you have been questioning the doctor: pray, what does he say of me?"

"That

“That you will recover,” said she briskly, “if you are tractable, and keep yourself unflurried.”

“I am glad to hear such intelligence; I am grown in love with life again, since you have honoured me with your dear attendance—But, lest he should be mistaken, let me confess one crime which I have committed, and of which you are possibly ignorant: I stole your picture the day after you shewed it to me: what shall I say to you to merit your forgiveness for so bold a theft? The truth is, despairing of ever possessing the dear original, I was tempted to seize her resemblance.”

“We will talk of that affair another time,” said she, pressing his hand;

hand: "you must be silent now for  
 "several hours."

He obeyed, with a look which  
 strongly discovered his feelings.

When the evening came on she  
 prepared to sit up with the nurse.

Sir Charles, during the night, hav-  
 ing wanted to know how the time  
 went, was surprized, on enquiring  
 after the hour, to hear her say, "three  
 "in the morning."

"H—n's!" cried he—"and you  
 "out of your bed? Have you a mind  
 "absolutely to kill me by destroying  
 "your health?"

"I can receive no harm," said she,  
 affectionately, "while I am giving you  
 "any satisfaction."

"Excellent

“Excellent creature!” replied he, transported, “what do I not already owe you?—And yet, my dear Mrs. Fermor—

“Say no more,” said she, putting the curtains of his bed close.—He was, though with some reluctance, silent: but was benefitted by her prohibition, for he was much easier at *nine*—He then insisted on her taking a little refreshment: and, calling Loyd and D’Anvers to him, ordered them to wait on, and execute Mrs. Fermor’s commands with the same attention and respect which they paid to himself.

When she had breakfasted, by his request, at his bed-side, he intreated her earnestly to take some rest in the next room, in which she would find  
every



every accommodation proper for her: but she told him that she could not leave him; adding, that, if she wanted sleep, she would take it in the chair in which she sat, as soon as he could bring himself to be composed.

That assurance had a very good effect upon him; for, that he might not disturb her, he would remain quiet for several hours, though she seldom closed her eyes, but watched his every motion with the most anxious solicitude.—When she did not hear him stir for some time, she gently opened the curtains to see how he was, and almost as often found his handsome eyes raised up to her with a grateful tenderness; which look she returned with an affectionate smile.

For

For above a week she thus carefully attended him, gave him all his medicines, and contrived a thousand methods to render them more palatable : she always assisted him in sitting up to receive any nourishment, suffered him to lean his head on her bosom, and held that head with her hand whenever he complained of uneasiness in it; of which he sometimes complained to be more frequently indulged.

When he was able to rise, that his bed might be made, she led him to his chair, and sat by him, that he might recline on her shoulder : when he grew better, and was unwilling to try to sleep as much as he should have done, she read to him, or told him  
some

some idle story to divert his thoughts from things of more consequence, and to throw him into salutary slumbers.

His fever, at length left him : yet a great weakness remained for a while, and his mind, though considerably eased, was still disturbed—If he could not live without her before, how could he now, when he had so much more reason to be charmed with her ? No man was ever more tenderly nursed, nor could any woman well discover a sincerer concern for his illness, or appear happier at his approaching recovery, than Mrs. Fermor. She also permitted a thousand little tender freedoms which he never attempted before, as they would have  
been

been immediately most severely interdicted.

One day, before he rose, while she was smoothing his pillow, she observed that his hair, which was very fine and thick, became troublesome by hanging over his eyes; she therefore went to put it up carefully under his cap. While she was so employed, she was obliged, of course, to come very close to him. He seized that opportunity to snatch a fond kiss, though he trembled at the same time, lest she should resent such a liberty—he even looked as if he was already smartly chidden.—Not willing, however, to make him unhappy, during his illness, she only shook her head at him, with a bushing smile which dissipated his apprehensions



apprehensions in a moment. Yet a sigh immediately followed, as he feared that these satisfactions would be prohibited on the re-establishment of his health.

He mended very fast; and though he trembled all over when he thought of parting with her, his extreme anxiety, lest her constant attendance on him (for she had not once been in bed) should injure her constitution, made him almost ready to desire her to return home of a night, as she had positively refused to accept of an apartment in his house.

The morning of the day came on which she was to go home—she had declared that she would not leave him till the evening, and that she would  
return

return to see him the next day; but he became melancholy, restless, and unhappy, though he strove to conceal his dispiriting sensations.

He now rose every day as soon as breakfast was over, and only lay down to procure some refreshment for an hour or two after dinner, during which she generally read him to sleep; but *that* afternoon he did not close his eyes.—When he rose to take his tea with her, he appeared so dejected that she began to be alarmed, dreading the return of the fever.—She watched him with inexpressible anxiety, even while she was striving to amuse him: finding that her endeavours to divert him were unsuccessful, “What is the matter with you,” said she, with an affectionate

affectionate look—"you are not ill  
 "again, I hope?"

"No," replied he, mournfully,  
 "but I shall be, I am afraid, when you  
 "have left me. It is, I am well affur-  
 "ed, highly necessary for you to go,  
 "and I should be miserable if you  
 "staid with me any longer on our  
 "present terms, which will not permit  
 "you, I am sensible, to think yourself  
 "at home. But," continued he, after  
 a little pause, during which he gazed  
 on her with ineffable affection, and  
 with a voice quite softened by ten-  
 derness, "can you still, my dear Mrs.  
 "Fermor, as you have seen the effects  
 "which your repeated refusals have  
 "had on me, can you still harden your  
 "heart against me?—Must all the  
 "sweet

" sweet indulgencies which I have re-  
 " ceived be for ever at an end? Is  
 " there no room for me to hope that  
 " I shall be able to inspire that gentle,  
 " generous bosom with something  
 " more than mere compassion? Why,  
 " oh! why, did it sustain this aching  
 " head, if you are determined to dis-  
 " continue blessings which I would  
 " freely purchase with my life? Tell  
 " me, only, what are the requisites I  
 " want to make you happy, and my in-  
 " creasing love, together with my  
 " never-weakened gratitude, shall fur-  
 " nish me with the means of obtaining  
 " them."

He stopped: his emotions would  
 not permit him to proceed, but his  
 eyes powerfully pleaded, and his



hands, which had for some time held hers, pressed them warmly to return a favourable answer.

After a short silence, Mrs. Fermor, with a sigh which seemed to force its passage from her overcharged bosom, with down-cast looks, and a glowing countenance, said, "I can resist no longer:—but—though I yield—I yield against my judgment—I yield, because I cannot see you unhappy—may we neither of us have reason to repent: if one of us *must*, may that person be myself.—May you, Sir Charles, ever be satisfied with what you have done."

Sir Charles staid to hear no more; he strained her to his panting bosom, and held her fast embraced for a long time;

time; till she making an effort to disengage herself from his arms, he cried, in a voice barely audible, "I want words to thank you as I ought, but my future conduct shall speak the sense I have of the favour which you have conferred on me."

It was impossible for him to go on at that time; joy had so entirely taken possession of him, that it became as troublesome as the vexation which arose from his former disappointment.

Mrs. Fermor, who saw with terror the flurry he was in, strove to turn the conversation to something less interesting, but she could not carry her point; his whole soul was so absolutely engrossed by *her*, that he could not employ his thoughts on any other

subject but the felicity which she had bestowed upon him.

A thousand times he thanked her for her goodness to him; as often he swore to spend every future hour of his life in making her happy: yet in the midst of his raptures the word *repent* started up, frequently, in his mind: he was still afraid that he was not beloved; at least, not with the ardor he loved. *That* apprehension, therefore, made him eager to redouble all his attentions to please, to charm an amiable woman who was really become necessary to his existence, and whose future happiness was to depend totally on him. Equally eager was he also to express every anxious solicitude for her health  
and

and peace, and even denied himself those gratifications, for the promotion of both the first and the last, which he had so often enjoyed.

When evening approached, he enquired if his people remembered that the chariot was to be ready to attend Mrs. Fermor, at the hour most agreeable to her.

She interrupted him, by saying  
 “There is no occasion for it: I shall  
 “not leave you to-night. Your spirits  
 “are too much agitated—I hope to  
 “see you better to-morrow.”

He assured her, that nothing but the fear of her being too much fatigued, could have driven him to wish her absence a single moment: “I hope, my  
 “dear Mrs. Fermor,” added he, “that

and K 3 “this



“ this separation will not be long necessary. If you will give me leave to prepare every thing”—

He was fearful of saying too much upon a subject which might not yet be so agreeable to her as he wished it to be.

A good humoured smile was all her reply—she exacted nothing from him, but a promise to endeavour to compose himself as soon as possible to sleep; and, to induce him to comply with her request, she made no resistance to an impassioned kiss which he seized when she bade him adieu.

He tried to oblige her, but he could not; he was too busy, all night, in planning schemes of happiness with her, and in contriving every thing for his

his marriage: and, though he strictly obeyed her in not speaking aloud, she heard him softly talking to himself, and repeating her name.

Such a behaviour increased her anxiety; she was very much afraid that the agitation of his spirits should occasion a relapse.

Determined to make an effort to silence him, if possible, she opened his curtains, and told him, that he would absolutely frustrate all his own schemes of felicity, and make *her* wretched, if he did not strive to keep himself quiet.

“It was my fear only of affecting you too much,” said she, “that hindered me from agreeing to be yours as soon as I saw that you would not

“ be happy without my consent, and  
 “ I hoped, by discovering an increa-  
 “ sing affection for you, to prepare  
 “ you, by degrees, to support a con-  
 “ fession which has been, nevertheless,  
 “ I am afraid, too suddenly declared,  
 “ as your health is so uncertain. If  
 “ you love me as much as you say  
 “ you do, Sir Charles, you will listen  
 “ to my advice, and make yourself  
 “ easy, when I assure you, that I will  
 “ with pleasure attend to *you* as soon  
 “ as you are well, upon a subject  
 “ which is, I find, too interesting to  
 “ you at present, to take up your  
 “ thoughts so entirely.”

So animating a promise, uttered  
 in so serious a manner, removed all his  
 doubts, and gave him so solid a satis-

“ faction

faction that, when the first flutter of his spirits subsided; when he had thanked her in terms adequate to his feelings; when he again and again kissed her hands with an ardour that discovered the transport which her kindness had excited in him, he became more calm, but could not sleep till morning.

She passed all the day following with him, and left him at night, to return to her own habitation, excessively fatigued, and not very well, as her mind and body had both been considerably harraffed: but, in a few days afterwards, she and Sir Charles were each of them recovered.

Sir Charles's fever left, indeed, a kind of languor upon him, which



made it necessary for him to be extremely careful of himself; he began, however, to prepare for his happiness.—He sent for his lawyer, and ordered a large settlement to be made for Mrs. Fermor, in case of her surviving him, and allotted several hundreds a year, for cloaths, &c. &c. during his life, that she might always have it in her power, in short, to live in the manner she chose, quite independent; and presented immediately five hundred pounds to her, to defray the incidental expences on the change of her situation.

He wrote to lady Ruffel, and to Sir George, to inform them of his approaching marriage, and invited them to come and see the lady—he,  
also,

also, wrote a long letter, filled with ecstasies, to Brudenel.

Brudenel having but just heard of his friend's illness, as he had been out of town, set off directly for the manor, and happened to arrive there a few minutes after dinner.

Sir Charles, who could not be prevailed on to leave Mrs. Fermor, to lie down, and who was really not able to sit up the whole day, had thrown himself carelessly by her as she sat upon the sofa, and laid his head in her lap.

He was in that attitude, holding one of her hands to his lips, when the door opened on a sudden, and Brudenel appeared.

Mrs. Fermor blushed, and Sir Charles, instantly rising, advanced to meet his friend, who fell back some paces, and, with an arch smile, desired that he might not interrupt so agreeable a tête à tête.

Sir Charles, not in the least disconcerted, said, with a politeness natural to him, accompanied with an affectionate smile, "Give me leave, " Mrs. Fermor, to introduce Mr. " Brudenel to you."

She received him as the friend of Sir Charles; who soon contrived to draw her into a conversation, in which he knew she would distinguish herself, and then earnestly watched to see, by the movement of Brudenel's features, if he was pleased with her: but, tho

tho' he had no reason to doubt his friend's approbation, as he discovered several indubitable marks of it, he could not help following him downstairs, when he took his leave, and taking him into the parlour, in order to ask him what he thought of her.

Brudenel, with a drollery peculiar to himself, said, "Your eagerness to hear this agreeable woman praised, who, I see plainly, possesses your whole heart, would tempt some unlucky fellow, now, to trifle with you a little, but I will not be so ill-natured Leufum — for, faith she is excessively clever."

"Dear George," replied Sir Charles, "is she not worth all, and more than all which I have suffered to gain her?—And yet I am, sometimes, half



“half afraid that she yields more to  
 “oblige me than herself.”

“What, have you still suspicions  
 “about her passion for you?—Sure-  
 “ly if you had any you would be not  
 “so mad as to marry her—but you  
 “cannot have any: I, who have only  
 “seen you together for so short a time  
 “pronounce her to be thoroughly in  
 “love with you.—Her eyes fully  
 “declare the feelings of her heart.”

“You flatter me now, George”—

“Upon my soul, I don’t—A wo-  
 “man, who was ever so little indif-  
 “ferent to you, would not have suf-  
 “fered you to place yourself in so  
 “familiar an attitude: devouring her  
 “hand, too”—

“You

“ You give me hopes—but you  
 “ don’t know her. I fancy, sometimes,  
 “ that she loves me fondly; there  
 “ is, however, so delicate a reserve  
 “ in all her words and actions—she  
 “ has more modesty and simplicity  
 “ of manners than a girl of fifteen—  
 “ Oh! here I could, indeed, devour  
 “ her, if she would let me! If I can  
 “ but make her life happy, I shall be  
 “ the happiest of men.”

Brudenel left him, laughing, telling him that he had no reason to entertain any discouraging apprehensions.

When Sir Charles returned to Mrs. Fermor, he thanked her for the politeness with which she had received his friend; and, before the day was over, presented to her a fine cabinet that contained

tained all his mother's jewels, which should, he told her, be new set, with additions, for her, according to her own taste.

Mrs. Fermor, who had, but just before Brudenel's arrival, heard the settlements, at Sir Charles's request, read to her, was absolutely oppressed with so much generosity, and said, with a voice quite softened, while her moistened eyes expressed even more than her words, " I want not, believe  
 " me, Sir Charles, so many proofs of  
 " your affection. I was more than satisfied before with everything which  
 " you have done for me. Could  
 " you but teach me always to keep  
 " your heart, I should consider that  
 " knowledge far more valuable than  
 every

“ every other acquisition for which I  
 “ am indebted to you ; but I fear that  
 “ the want of youth and beauty,  
 “ wants of which I was never sensible  
 “ till you taught me what it was to  
 “ love, may in time deprive me of  
 “ a tenderness, at the bare thoughts  
 “ of losing which my blood is chil-  
 “ led.”

“ Make yourself thoroughly easy,  
 “ then, on that subject” said Sir Charles,  
 embracing her passionately, “ and be  
 “ assured, that I love you for attrac-  
 “ tions which will neither fade nor  
 “ be diminished : and were my heart  
 “ so much in danger of changing as  
 “ you believe it to be, this charming  
 “ confession of your disinterested love  
 “ will fix me yours for ever—I was  
 “ conquered



“ conquered by reason, not by pas-  
 “ sion. Look up, then, my dearest life,  
 “ with some confidence, to the man  
 “ who has freely chose you from all  
 “ your sex, to make both him and  
 “ yourself happy, and who will never  
 “ give you the slightest cause to repent  
 “ of having reposed so great a trust  
 “ in him.”

Mrs. Fermor, quite overcome by  
 her own tender sensations, and by the  
 endearing proof of Sir Charles's af-  
 fection, gave herself up to the de-  
 lightful satisfaction of being beloved :  
 and, in a few days afterwards, in the  
 presence of Sir George and lady Ruf-  
 sel, and Mr. Brudenel, became the  
 wife of a man who, as much as he  
 at that moment doated on her, knew

not

not half the value of the treasure which he possessed; but of which he grew more and more sensible every day. *She* also declared to him, some months after their marriage, that tho' she had long known content, she had never felt felicity till then.

Sir Charles, quite enamoured, quite enraptured with the entire possession of the heart of a woman whom he adored, treated her always with the sincerest and most respectful tenderness, which she ever returned with a captivating, but modest sensibility.

Miss Bloom, after having coquetted with several of her admirers, and jilted a few, to shew the power of her charms, became at length, by treachery, a sacrifice.

a sacrifice to a man of pleasure, who, when satiated, left her in distress.

Miss Napper, for the sake of his fortune, married Mr. Maynard, whom, from jealousy and avarice, locked her up, and rendered her life compleatly miserable.

Lady Leusum having heard of Harriot's misfortunes, so much compassionated her unhappy condition, that she allowed her sixty pounds a year for her life, provided she spent that life in retirement and repentance. She also desired Sir Charles, who insisted upon regulating his conduct by her advice, to increase poor Lucy's allowance, who did not long want any assistance, as she fell an early martyr to

to the follies of her youth, and to the consequences of an ill-placed passion.

Lady G—, who never entirely conquered her affection for Sir Charles, on his accidental entrance one day with lady Leusum, when she was sitting with lady Ruffel, fainted away; and when, by the attention of lady Leusum, she recovered, confessed her rival's superior merit, and wished her a long continuance of the felicity which she deserved.

Sir Charles prudently left the room on the first appearance of lady G—'s distress; but when he called again for his Fanny, and was informed by lady Ruffel with how much delicate tenderness she had behaved to the countess, who was then gone home, he  
caught



# 214 THE RATIONAL LOVERS.

caught her to his transported bosom  
with raptures inexpressible. Their mu-  
tual affection, as it was entirely found-  
ed on reason, was not diminished by  
time : it increased every hour, and,  
while they lived together, was never  
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